25th Anniversary Issue

dissent

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Against the New Conservatism

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Looking Back at McCarthyism
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Thanks Thanks Thanks

We're delighted to report to our readers that as of late November, we have gone over the top in our drive to raise $25,000 for *Dissent*! Right now, we're a few hundred dollars over, and we expect, by the end of the year when the drive closes formally, to be over a little better than that. More people contributed to this fund drive than the last one, two years ago!

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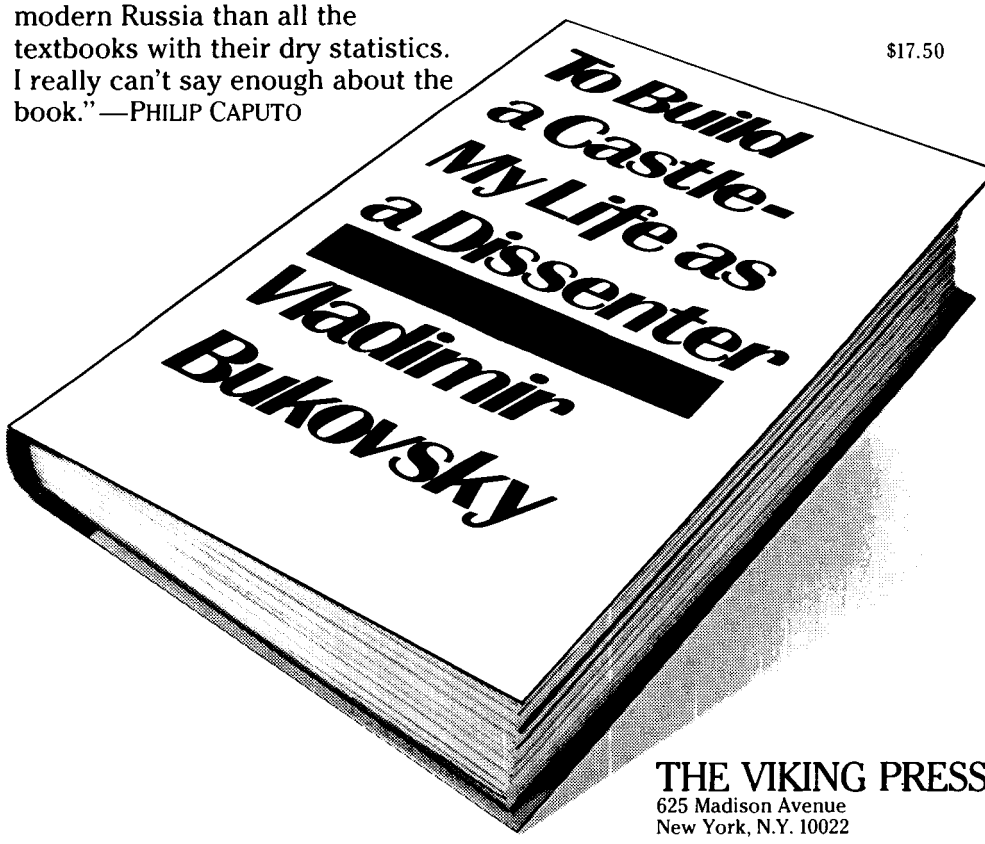

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The First 25 Years

Stanley Plastrik

Of course, it's impossible to pinpoint the beginning of *Dissent*. Probably the idea of a new magazine was mentioned first in early 1953; the first issue is dated January 1, 1954. (I recall vividly the moment when the first copy came from the printer.) It certainly was "in the works" at least a year before this. We had agreed not to begin unless we had funds to sustain the effort for at least one year. The task of raising this sum—I think it was $6,000—proved difficult.

Which particular exchange of letters among old political friends and associates can be said to have sparked the idea of *Dissent?* Perhaps more important than this question is the fact that in addition to those who had been together for some time (Socialist party, one or another grouping of the Trotskyist movement, etc.), there were those coming from quite different backgrounds. The genial title *Dissent* would be the contribution of Lew Coser—editor Bernard Rosenberg having destroyed the attractive notion of naming the magazine *No!* with the quip that it would be too "affirmative."

The external forces behind the decision to go ahead were probably two-fold: first, McCarthyism and the desire to make some kind of a stand, given the actions of so many liberal and leftist intellectuals when confronted with the half-bluff, half-threat of that obscene man; second, an intense dissatisfaction with the existing political, socialist, and leftist organizations.

Where *Dissent* began does not have the importance of how and why, but has at least the advantage of being easier to answer. Its origins were humble indeed. In the modestly furnished bedroom of our family's newly rented apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, off-Broadway, on the fifth floor; some time in the winter of 1953, on a cold and bleak wintery day. Why in the bedroom? Curiously enough, the explanation is "political" and reflects the times. We had rented out a room in the apartment to a young woman, a teacher and a stranger whom we did not want passing through the living room while the formation of a magazine called *Dissent* was under discussion! Who knew in those days? Some months later, when the first issue dated Winter 1954 would appear, the initial mailing of some 2,000 copies was handled in that same bedroom; the packages and mail sacks were lugged to the nearest post office on our younger and then stronger backs. All this was 25 years ago. □

Lewis Coser

Anyone who would have suggested to Irving Howe or to me in the early months of 1953 that the magazine we had begun vaguely to talk about—it eventually became *Dissent*—would last for 25 years would have been treated by us with a measure of solicitude for his mental balance.

When we first discussed the matter in my living room in Wellesley, we felt obliged at the height of the McCarthy period to create a journal in which we could freely express our dissent from the abysmal political and intellectual atmosphere, a place where we would be unhampered by the cowardice and caution of what passed at the time for the left-of-center press. We thought all would be well if we could manage to put out four issues for the year 1954. We vaguely hoped that maybe there would be another year or two, but 25—good Lord! We certainly didn't think of that. Sociologists like to speak of the unanticipated consequences of social action; in its own way, the 25th anniversary of *Dissent* must certainly be reckoned among these.

When we broached the idea to a number of our friends at a conference in New York, the response was heartening. If memory serves me right, there were some 50 persons at that conference, practically all of whom promised to contribute articles or

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money, preferably both. The first issue of the magazine, in the winter of 1953-54, elicited a good number of favorable comments. But there was also a first review of the magazine in the pages of *Commentary* in which Nathan Glazer, then on the first leg of his long and tortuous trek from youthful radicalism to "responsible" neoconservatism, suggested that *Dissent* "is an unmitigated disaster as far as what is left of socialist thought in this country is concerned." He seemed prepared to assist at the speedy burial of the magazine; in fact, his review was kindly intended to shorten our death throes as much as possible. Well, we hoped he would be wrong, but that he turned out to be *that* wrong, we would not have believed in our fondest dreams.

We survived. Yet survival is hardly meritorious in itself. Whatever merit we have acquired must come from other sources. And here I would like to suggest, at the risk of sounding self-congratulatory, that throughout the years, and despite many errors and mistakes, we succeeded, by and large, in being a voice of sanity and conscience on the left. Whether it was fighting against McCarthyism and the pusillanimity and cowardice of many who abetted him; whether it was in raising our voice, at a very early stage, against the insane policies of both Democratic and Republican administrations in Indochina; whether it was in support of the civil rights movement and the early stages of the New Left; or whether it was in criticizing the suicidal tactics, the mindless activism of certain Kamikaze fighters of a New Left that was about to disintegrate, we always attempted, no doubt sometimes without succeeding, to define a radical perspective that remained true to the democratic and fraternal vision of those for whom socialism was the image of their desire.

We most often went wrong, in my judgment, when we attempted to take stands on specific policies of the moment; while we were at our best when, be it only in very broad strokes, we attempted to delineate the vision of a socialism with a human face. Above all, we saw it as our task, as the title of the magazine suggests, "to think otherwise," to use our critical judgment as a weapon to expose the pretensions, the obfuscations, and manipulative stratagems of those in the political and intellectual worlds who either had made their peace with the powers that be in the East or in the West, or who felt tempted, in what they conceived as the good fight against the Powers of Darkness, to claim that any means, no matter how antidemocratic or illiberal, might be used by the Children of Light. We provided a platform for Herbert Marcuse when he engaged in principled debates with Erich Fromm on psychoanalysis and politics; we parted company with him when he suggested that civil liberties should be reserved for the virtuous, with the voice of the sinful to be stilled. We printed some of C. Wright Mills's most significant essays, but we turned against him when he listened with admiration to the appeals of Castro.

We were sometimes criticized for allegedly being "predictable." But what these critics counted as a failing, I am inclined to count as among our more significant achievements. Not for us the wild fluctuations of ideas of those, always in quest of some novelty, who in rapid succession moved from one political position to its opposite: from heroic revolutionary postures to positions in the Washington bureaucracy, or from civil-rights activism to publicity for George Meany and the revival of the Cold War. We tried to avoid the self-righteous certainties of the sectarians, while not succumbing to the lures of so-called pragmatists who lost any vision of worthwhile goals in the sheer joy of manipulating means.

WHEN I LOOK over old issues of the magazine and reread what my friends and I wrote a decade or two ago, I sometimes cannot refrain from smiling broadly at the mistakes we made, the crudity of our expression, the failures of predictions. But there is nothing—well, almost nothing—I found I was actually ashamed of having written or helped publish. I am sure that the other editors feel the same way.

There have been moments when I have thought, though only fleetingly, that it was perhaps time to cease publishing the magazine, that we had done what we could and the torch might now pass into other hands. Yet every time I soon felt that stilling the voice of *Dissent* would mean so significant a loss in the beleaguered camp of the radical and socialist left, it would be irresponsible to give up the fight. Actuarial tables being what they are, it is to be expected that the ranks of us graybeards will soon be thinned, as they have already begun to be. But younger authors and editors have steadily been attracted, and who knows, there may still be a few happy anniversaries in the future of *Dissent*.

Sometimes—though to be frank, not too often—younger writers or students of mine express a measure of admiration for my having manned the ramparts for such a long time and under what, they

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think, must have been trying circumstances. But in fact, when I think back to these years, what sticks in my memory is not the occasional strains, tensions, even sacrifices, that have come my way when helping to edit the magazine, but the sheer pleasure that I derived from doing it. Some of the most significant rewards of my life have come from my work on *Dissent*. I feel what the young Wordsworth felt about a much more significant political event in his lifetime, that "it was a joy to be alive" in those days. I am waiting for the encore. □

Irving Howe

For a quarter of a century now we have been putting out *Dissent*, so it seems right to ask, in some small informal way, what it has meant and why we have persisted.

The magazine arose out of the decomposition of the socialist movement in America, or what little was left of it by the early '50s. Some of us rebelled against the sterility and suffering of life in a political sect: it seemed to do no good and besides, we could no longer bear it. Yet the idea that had first brought us to the sect seemed still to matter, far from exhausted, open to renewal. Others among us came from different places, some independent writers and intellectuals drawn to the idea of socialism or the need for criticism.

When intellectuals can do nothing else, they start a magazine. But starting a magazine is also doing something: at the very least it is thinking in common. And thinking in common can have unforeseen results.

A magazine like *Dissent*, started out of a need for reconsidering and reviving a political idea, is not likely to have an easy time of it. Such magazines don't brim over with confidence. They seem anxious, sometimes distracted, perhaps even boring. They cannot gleam and shine, as some would like. They have to turn in upon themselves, questioning first principles (their own), yet fighting angrily, fiercely the enemies who would annihilate those principles. So you end up pleasing only a small number of people, and even them only provisionally, quizzically, with an odd passion of doubt.

Over the years we have printed some brilliant writers, some first-rate pieces: Silone and Mailer, Chiaromonte and Tertz, Swados and Lichtheim, Heilbroner and Lekachman, Pachter and Harrington. But brilliant articles, desirable and hard to come by as they are, were not for me the main thing. The main thing was those articles that perhaps only a minority of our readers read, the articles that tried to reach back to the sources of the troubles of socialism and to suggest how we might think about such matters in ways that are clearer, more honest, more humane. For whatever else, we were not content with the given. We did not believe that present-day society is sufficiently just to warrant a relaxation of criticism. Year by year we shook off remnants of ideology, till we seemed to have nothing, at times, but the motivating ethic of socialism; yet we wanted thereby to hold fast to the socialist vision, to give it new strength and value. However well or poorly we did this, for me it was the central purpose of the magazine.

For a long time, we could do little but engage in the fundamental intellectual activity of social criticism. This, to be sure, is not enough for socialists, especially if that criticism comes to seem self-subsistent. Yet, there are moments when patience is all, and stubbornness too. I recall a few sentences from Harold Rosenberg: "The weapon of criticism is doubtless inadequate. Who on that account would choose to surrender it?"

Now it seems that we have in America a new possibility for at least a modest revival of a socialist movement. Yet, just because there is such a possibility (who knows how strong?), I hope the magazine can keep going for a few more years. We need to pass on to our younger friends not so much a particular crux of opinion as a ranging style of criticism. We need to persuade that socialism is a vital problem, not an easy certainty; that a movement to be taken seriously requires the foundation of serious thought.

The passion of doubt and the doubt of passion, the return to the start and the defense of the ideal behind the start: such paradoxes, never likely to stir great applause, have kept us going. With a bit of luck and help, they will keep us going a while longer.

It has been a good thing to do, and despite occasional grousing about the hardships of running a magazine on frayed shoestrings, I am glad we have done it. Given the choice and the circumstances, I would do it again, despite all the limits and troubles that have been part of our work. To borrow one of the better phrases of the young, we have done our thing. □

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David Bromwich

First, a parable. There was once a beggar named Equality, who rattled his cup to every passerby, and got a meager subsistance from the few poor coins he gathered here and there. One day he was joined by a more or less respectable-looking man (wearing glasses and carrying a briefcase), who promised to keep the beggar company and gather coins with him, from three till six every afternoon. He kept his promise, and, as the months and seasons passed, he and the beggar had plenty of talks, which the beggar found alternately tedious and "intriguing." Then, one splendid morning, the beggar's routine was disturbed by the approach of a handsome stranger (dressed in a denim jacket and cowboy boots); with a swagger and a smile, the stranger said to him, "I'm with you"; and suddenly, as if to prove his sincerity, he pulled out a revolver and shot two wealthy and complacent-looking passersby. He was clapped in prison and the beggar never saw him again. The next day, a beautiful and glamorous stranger (not at all as made-up as you might think) separated herself from the noontime rush and embraced the beggar warmly. She said, "I love you; you're wonderful," and, as if to prove her sincerity, she placed in his cup a check for $100 (which he spent more quickly than you might assume), and added as she waved goodbye: "I'll mention you at the Academy Awards." She did; but he never saw her again. All this time, the more or less respectable-looking man had been keeping the beggar company from three till six every afternoon. If you ask him about it, the beggar will tell you how much he misses the two extraordinary strangers, whose impetuous passage left his head spinning, and whose memory is like the flaring of a comet that nobody observes twice in one lifetime. Still, the beggar admits that the fellow who sits beside him in the afternoons is tolerable company, and between them they get a little more than the beggar could have got alone.

Dissent is a loosely-bound fraternity of readers and writers who agree on the worth of something our masthead calls "democratic socialism." But the name hardly matters. It is the beggar's cause, and the chief virtue it breeds in those who stand by it is patience. The long exercise of patience fosters irony—a condition into which the editors are sometimes accused of having fallen. Certain of them might admit the truth of the charge sorrowfully, others gleefully, with Baudelaire's triumphant cry: "Guilty—guilty on all counts!" Without putting myself in either camp, I note that those who employ irony in defense of a principle are at least proof against the veerings of the fanatic and the caprices of the fellow-traveler, to say nothing of the principled bigotry that overtakes so many well-meaning "left" publications. A sectarian qualm having once arisen concerning the pages occupied by a foreign contributor, the Editor firmly announced: "That man has more intellectual distinction [drawing out *intellectual* to six syllables; a tactic reserved for special occasions] than everyone in this room put together." Moments of high drama aside, most editorial disputes are settled with a joke, or with the untoppable retort: "If you really think so, put it in writing and we'll publish it."

What first attracted me to *Dissent* was Michael Harrington's "Why We Need Socialism in America," a work of persuasion remarkable for its coherence, and still more for its eloquent refusal of stock rhetoric. Looking at the table of contents for that issue, I found, among the names of editors and contributing editors, Paul Goodman, Norman Mailer, Harold Rosenberg, Erich Fromm. What could they have in common with each other, let alone with Harrington? It now seems to me that a first principle shared by all of them, and foreign to the usual conduct of political discourse, was—to adapt a phrase of Goodman's—the proper coalescence of the utopian essay with the practical proposal. True, Mailer contributed to the magazine a *dys*topian sketch of "the white negro," and after unveiling his creature told all who came to look: "Love him, for he is your future." It is sometimes forgotten that Mailer also contributed a critique of the liberalism of David Riesman, and several shorter essays in his most workmanlike vein. *Dissent* is helplessly, inevitably—at times cheerfully—in the position of the skeptic at a left-wing meeting, who raises his hand to remark, at the moment of maximum uplift and solidarity: "I don't object to storming the barricades: but first, how many demonstrators can you count on? and second, what do you suppose is the average income of the policemen manning the barricades?" You may want to kill that skeptic; but you remember that he's your best leaflet-distributor; and there's a suspicious rumor that he wrote all the leaflets himself. In this respect, a characteristic moment in the history of *Dissent* is the early exchange between Fromm and Herbert Marcuse—after the appearance of Marcuse's attack on Freudian

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revisionism—with Fromm, I take it, arguing the skeptic's cause, and pointing out that Marcuse is free to regard *love* as an expression of ideological superstructure only because he is unconstrained by the experience of any therapeutic practice whatever.

For steadiness of resolve, consistency of principle, freedom from the cant of liberalism and socialism alike, *Dissent* has ranked high. It was, I believe, for a brief period during the 1960s, low on imagination. The Vietnam War haunted the waking life of a generation: *Dissent* did not see why this should be so, hence assumed it was not so, and, notwithstanding Joseph Buttinger's conscientious essays, treated the war as a secondary issue. "Guns-and-butter," the terrible slogan of those years, was in fact possible economically but not psychologically: the suspension of conscience that was needed to fight an evil war abroad would eventually make itself felt at home, and fortify the unembarrassable selfishness of our political atmosphere today. With a little more imagination, I think *Dissent*'s editors would have joined the antiwar movement earlier and less reluctantly. On the larger question of their relations with the New Left, some of the editors have commented with a nostalgia touched by regret. For my part I can see nothing to regret. Having gone to school in New Left circles, where "commitment" preceded "action" by a few minutes at most, I found *Dissent*'s emphasis on argument, definition-by-contrast, and the subdivision of all friends into friends and enemies, positively refreshing. In this I may be accused of sheer perverseness. But surely the luminaries of the New Left have traced their progress in flights too dizzying for any eye to track: between terrorism and capitalist apologetics—in the same decade, often in the same person—they moved far too cunningly for an alliance to be effected. The saving remnant are ensconced in government and university jobs, evolving new dialectical modes.

In Nigel Dennis's *Cards of Identity*, the psychoanalyst-author of a spurious political confession writes about a monastery staffed entirely by ex-Communists, where "each heretic believes that he alone broke [with the Party] at precisely the moment when the *eau-de-vie* of Communism changed to the ditch-water of absolutism; those who broke before him he regards as renegades, those who broke after, as charlatans." The confessional etiquette of left-wing apostasy is about the same now as it was for Whittaker Chambers, and there are ideologues-without-a-party who can tell you the exact year, month, and day in which every manifestation of the American left became suspect. The older editors of *Dissent*, whose presence still dominates the journal, appear to take a less severe view—let us call it an agnostic view—of their own past and of the trappings in which their cherished ideals once found expression. For in-fighters of the left, ex-Trotskyists and ex-Communists, they are surprisingly without rancor. Because they were in love with ends rather than means, they could "discover the truth" about left-wing politics and yet refuse to discard their ideals as wreckage. Agnosticism of this kind is possible only to those who have not mistaken a wholly personal will to power for the universal quest for justice. Let the founders of *Dissent* accept this as a sufficiently modest compliment. And perhaps they will see the relevance to their enterprise of one of Hazlitt's reflections on youth: "A person who forgets all the sentiments and principles to which he was most attached at nineteen, can have no sentiments ever after worth being attached to." In the stability of its connection with the beliefs on which it was founded, *Dissent* remains, despite its age, the most youthful of journals. □

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WINTER 1979

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Thunder on the Right?

It's almost like completing a circle. *Dissent* marks its 25th Anniversary with an issue featuring articles on the swing to the right in American politics and intellectual life. When we started in 1954, we were polemicizing against a similar trend. There are differences, of course. We have no McCarthyism today, and that is good. But the intellectual level of present-day conservatism is decidedly lower than that of its '50s predecessor, and politically the current rightward trend is deadlier, nastier, and more dangerous than what we had in the '50s. "Ikeism" meant stagnation but not a serious effort to dismantle the welfare state, such as we witness today.

How strong is the rightward trend? It would be foolish to delude, or console, ourselves with mere scannings of public-opinion polls and even electoral results. Albert Shanker, an intelligent man, has recently written that the polls indicate many of the people who have yielded to the "anti-spending" furor also favor continuation, perhaps even expansion of social services. He sees this as evidence that the rightward trend is rather superficial, not deep-going. He may be right, but the evidence to which he points doesn't persuade. For the question to be asked is: which of the conflicting sociopolitical impulses ("anti-spending"/"more social services" in shorthand) is the stronger now? for which can more public energy be summoned? A skilled worker who has to make his mortgage payments on his own home may still favor national health insurance, but if he is swept along by the current demagogy—to say nothing of the reality of his skewed local taxes, which makes life hard for him—then, in behalf of political realism, it must be acknowledged that there is a significant turn to the right.

OF COURSE there is. You can see it not only in the enormous increase of corporate advertising that praises the virtue of "free enterprise," or the growing number, influence, and prosperity of the conservative intellectuals. You can see it also in the steady shift of the Carter administration rightward—in its willingness to accept "compromises" on energy and taxes, which yield windfalls to the rich, in its chosen stance of chilly distance from the labor movement. You can see it in the Congress, presumably elected as part of a liberal sweep but actually turning into a conservative swamp. You can see it in the undignified retreat of liberal (or "liberal") politicians, who announce that they can "cut spending" better than the conservatives. Above all, you can see it in the fact that the right has seized the political and intellectual initiative, so much so that whatever political debate we have is taking place on its chosen terrain.

For there is a "law" of democratic politics: whichever side pushes back its opponent not only gains a practical advantage in the shifting relationships of social power, it succeeds in significantly transforming its opponents' thought, style, language. It worms its way, so to speak, into the mind of the other side. Today this means the *conservatizing of liberalism,* a phenomenon at least as troubling as the rise of the right. No, more troubling. For we may suspect that the right will soon reach its natural limit in American politics, with a few Republican victories and more Republican losses, while an increasingly pusillanimous American liberalism will acquiesce in a Democratic party Carterized into a "pragmatism" without substance.

There are a few exceptions to this trend. Senator

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Edward Kennedy, clearly trying to look beyond the immediate moment, has staked out a position slightly to the left of President Carter (about as far to the left as the Russian Tea Room is from Carnegie Hall). Kennedy has his extraordinary family charisma to rely upon, and this provides him some protection from the current temper that most other politicians don't have.

Even the labor movement, though alarmed by what has been happening, has not been able to mobilize much political strength—not in Congress, not in the cities. Partly this may be due to an aging leadership that has lost its combative élan; but mostly it seems the result of genuine bewilderment. The unions don't know what has hit them; they gave too much credence to all the talk about social harmony; they aren't, in many instances, ready to get back to the traditional postures of struggle, though it looks as if they'll have to.

WHY THIS RIGHTWARD SHIFT? I have no quick or certain answers, but a few questions can at least be posed: are we witnessing a revolt of middle-class and skilled-working-class beneficiaries of the welfare state, those helped by it to a modest affluence enabling them, say, to buy modest homes and now, hard-pressed by taxes and inflation, unwilling or unable to accept a politics that would help other, newly arising segments of the population? To what extent—surely to *some* extent!—is there an element of racism in this reaction, a no longer veiled contempt for "welfare blacks"? If one sees everywhere in our society (and still more so, our culture) signs of a new "principle" of selfishness, a "me-ism" dressed in the old rags of individualism, how are we to explain its upsurge at a time when our society moves increasingly toward corporate bigness and the state intervenes more and more, as it must, in economic life? Is this a last spasm of social sullenness before we are dragged inexorably into that centrally managed economy that Robert Heilbroner foresees as the next stage of capitalism?

It would be foolish to pretend we know the answers; enough to be able to ask the questions. Some of these matters are touched upon in the articles that follow; others I have tried to grapple with in a long essay, "The Right Menace," in the *New Republic*, September 8, 1978; and still others will be discussed in *Dissent*'s future issues. Suffice it to say that the phenomenon is real and, whether long- or short-lived, dangerous. The liberalism that remains the central tradition of American culture will sooner or later regather its energies for counterattack, and we of the democratic left must enable it to do so, indeed, persuade it that it can be most effective if it moves closer to a social democratic position. But meanwhile, let us not delude ourselves about what is happening: it's not good. □

Peter Connolly

Conservative Drift in Congress

The 95th Congress has been a disaster for American liberalism. A partial listing of progressive measures that failed to survive the Capitol Hill obstacle course would include any type of welfare reform, tax reform, labor reform, or national health insurance; national no-fault auto insurance; a bill establishing a consumer protection agency; hospital cost containment; and the most important aspects of the Administration's much heralded urban program. As finally enacted, the Humphrey-Hawkins full-employment bill is an empty gesture that mocks the hopes of those whom social scientists refer to as the "structurally unemployed."

The most significant new legislation is indicative of the present conservative mood in Congress. The income tax reduction is regressive and unjust. The tax rate on capital gains and the corporate income tax were lowered, disproportionately benefiting the wealthy. Different versions of a college tuition tax credit, long sought by congressional spokesmen for the upper middle class, were finally passed by both Houses, though neither version became law due to a credible and praiseworthy veto threat by the President. And a record defense

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budget of $116 billion sailed through Congress with minimal scrutiny.

Nor can this bleak legislative box score begin to convey the squalid atmosphere of the Senate floor, where increasingly confident conservatives dominate all discussions with endless reiterations of the need for an end to "wasteful" social spending and ceaseless crocodile tears on behalf of oppressed suburbia. This trend culminated in the Senate's 58-28 vote in July for a balanced budget by 1981—a pledge that, if kept, will doom all meaningful social legislation for the indefinite future.

WHAT IS HAPPENING? President Carter's legislative proposals have been moderately liberal and his Administration, at the staff level, is largely composed of veterans of past liberal campaigns and the public-interest law community. The Democrats possess sizable margins in the Senate and House, and the Democratic leadership in both bodies is more liberal than it has been in a generation.

Most professional observers of the political scene tend to ascribe the liberal debacle to the inexperience/incompetence of the Administration and to the frightened congressional response to the national conservative mood.

Conservative mood and ineffable White House maladroitness are both very real to liberal members of Congress. Every day's mail seems mainly to be composed of bitter letters decrying lesbian plots to extend the ratification deadline for ERA, strident calls for a balanced budget coupled with threats of defeat, denunciations of the "giveaway" of the "American Canal in Panama" at the behest of "New York bankers," and tirades on government-as-parasite. A friend who works for Senator Bentsen told me that Bentsen's vote for the Canal Treaty not only prompted piles of vituperative letters from outraged Texas patriots but also many death threats. Much of this can be written off as the work of cranks, but it has a cumulative effect. This effect has recently been reinforced by the defeats of Congressman Fraser in the Minnesota Senate primary and Governor Dukakis of Massachusetts by strident reactionaries. These elections may not have the national significance universally ascribed to them on Capitol Hill but they certainly are disquieting to congressmen with well-known liberal voting records.

Next to this fear of the public mood, the incompetence of some Administration lobbyists is not that important. But White House emissaries to Capitol Hill do often combine elitist arrogance, political tone-deafness, and simple lack of knowledge so as to retard the progress of the President's programs. Moreover, the President, at least prior to his (perhaps short-lived) Middle East summit triumph, has not been able to inspire trust, respect, loyalty, or simple liking in Congress, even among those Democratic centrists who ought to be his natural allies.

The Administration has achieved its few victories in Congress either on issues when senators and representatives found it politically expedient to support the President (e.g., civil service reform, ERA extension, the D.C. representation constitutional amendment) or, rightly or wrongly, when they perceived a genuine national, usually foreign-policy, interest to be at stake (Panama Treaty, natural gas pricing compromise, Mideast arms sales, ending the Turkish arms embargo).

If Great Society liberalism is increasingly moribund in Congress, what is supplanting it?

It is, I believe, a revivified conservatism, which draws strength from two older and two new kinds of right-wing attitudes.

The older varieties can be denominated by traditional and populist conservatism. Traditional conservatives make the same arguments now that they made in 1936. (In some cases, like that of Nebraska's benighted Carl Curtis, they are literally the same people.) Balance the budget, less money for social welfare boondoggles, more for worldwide anti-Communism, praise for the farmer, distrust of the city, and, above all, hatred of the "bureaucrat" and love for the businessman. From attacks on WPA "leaf-raking" to gleeful exposés of artists getting CETA grants, this mentality has withstood the ravages of time. Traditional conservatives do not now display, it is true, the venomous provincialism, anti-European isolationism, and anti-Semitism that distinguished their forebears. But connoisseurs of American political malignity could catch a whiff of this old attitude in Senator Robert Dole's snide remark about "Democrat wars," including the one against Hitler, in his 1976 debate with Walter Mondale.

The number of traditional conservatives in Congress was blessedly reduced by the anti-Goldwater landslide of 1964 and the Watergate election of 1974, but they still form the bulk of the disciplined Republican minorities and the solid bloc of Southern conservative Democrats.

The second strain is the right-wing populism, which was reborn in the '60s. It classically

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represents the outlook of the construction worker with the American flag decal on his hardhat. Its ideologists, Kevin Phillips and William Rusher, dreamed of uniting the white working, middle, and "producer" upper classes into a ferocious crusade against bureaucrats, planners, foundation executives, and welfare recipients. This was to be a conservatism based not so much on laissez-faire economics as on cultural hostility. To be sure, the seething resentments that Phillips discerned and vainly hoped to mold into a coherent outlook still exist in the country. Howard Jarvis sometimes seems like a creation of Kevin Phillips.

Yet, populist conservatism has not yet made a major impact in Congress. It is said that one reason George Wallace decided not to run for the Senate was a correct perception that he would be radically out of place there. Congressional politics demands geniality and the blurring of distinctions. A bitter, almost European-fascist ideology based on a warped concept of class struggle simply does not fit congressional behavior. I have seen Senator Jesse Helms, an ultraconservative, put his arm around George McGovern and talk to him as though McGovern were a North Carolina tobacco farmer. It is hard to imagine a similar scene between, say Aneurin Bevan and Winston Churchill, let alone Léon Blum and Pierre Laval.

A new variant of conservative ideology rapidly gaining adherents in Congress might be termed Lafferism, in honor of its slapdash "theoretician," University of Southern California professor Arthur Laffer. Its proponents, such as Congressmen Jack Kemp and William Steiger, and former *Wall Street Journal* editorialist Jude Wanniski, argue for a massive reduction in taxes and a general shrinkage in the size of government. This, they maintain, will unleash the productive genius of the American people, giving us painless prosperity and even higher absolute tax revenues for the hated government. This movement's hero is, of all people, John F. Kennedy, whom conservatives loathed when alive. They honor him for his tax cut proposal of 1963, which was enacted into law in 1964. For them, Kennedy's historical importance lies in their seeing him as a precursor of Laffer.

LIBERALS, such as economist Walter Heller, have generally been content to skewer the faulty economic arguments and lack of historical perspective of those entranced by the "Laffer curve." In so doing, they have missed the enormous potential appeal of this idea and the political shrewdness of its proponents. For Lafferism attracts traditional conservatives who abhor government spending as well as hard-eyed, right-wing populists who hate to see their money spent on sex education, racial quotas, or soft loans to Tanzania. But it has none of the pinched, narrow qualities of traditional conservatism or the bitter, off-putting resentments of Wallaceism. It perfectly suits the genial, self-absorbed, fashionable, "laid-back" callousness of the late '70s.

Most important, Lafferism casts liberal Democrats in the role of nay-sayers, advocates of the need for "responsibility," of maintaining a not too unbalanced budget, of a duty to help the poor, of promoting growth-inhibiting environmental standards, of defending an unsatisfactory status quo. When Lyndon Johnson bellowed, "We're for a lot of things, and we're against mighty few" at a Brooklyn crowd in October 1964, he gave expression to the fatuous but politically successful optimism that informed New Deal liberalism from the '30s to the recent past. If responsible liberals can no longer promise a boundless future, Lafferites can and do.

Lafferites cast themselves in the image of JFK, genial but tough, wanting to let the people keep their own money to pursue their own happiness in their own way. They often strike a neo-Chestertonian, Merrie-America note. Liberals are portrayed as hypocritical moralizers who wrongly believe they know better than the people how the people's resources should be allocated. Lafferites, unlike traditional conservatives, at least try to be at home at the truck stop as well as in the boardroom. They believe that at the end of the Laffer curve lies electoral dominance, and they may be right.

The final wellspring of the conservative revival is that strain of ideology now known as neoconservatism. Its nature has been discussed at length in these pages and elsewhere and one need mention its central tenets only cursorily. Neoconservatives emphasize the fragility of democratic institutions, the problem of unanticipated consequences of social programs, and the mysterious and precarious qualities of healthy communities. Government social action is generally seen as stemming from naive and destructive meliorative impulses, which sometimes mask a thrust for power by the "new class." Tradition is the only social source of health, and modern life itself is frequently envisaged as a kind of distemper. In foreign policy, neoconservatives are often the most

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simplistic of anti-Communists and hold the strategic wisdom of George Meany in high regard.

In congressional politics, neoconservatism has until recently been important chiefly as a tendency regarding foreign policy in the Democratic party. Senators Jackson and Moynihan hate the Soviet government and all its works, but they do not yet believe that federally assisted housing harms the moral fiber of those who live in it. However, in the intellectual sphere, there lately have appeared signs of a putative alliance between neoconservatives and other types of conservatives discussed above. *Commentary* has featured in recent months articles retrospectively justifying the morality of America's Vietnam intervention and defending the motivations behind Proposition 13. Neoconservative Ben Wattenberg is currently editing *Public Opinion*, a glossy new publication of the suddenly ubiquitous American Enterprise Institute, which seems to be straight business propaganda.

This movement toward coalition may ultimately be of considerable political importance. For neoconservative intellectuals will provide the burgeoning right-wing movement with a certain moral ballast and thus render it seemingly more fit to govern should destiny beckon. It is symptomatic that Irving Kristol, perhaps the most influential neoconservative intellectual, has become a leading advisor to Jack Kemp, the fast-rising congressman from New York.

The social meaning of the bizarre partnership is wonderful to contemplate. Daniel Boorstin, a premature neoconservative, has written at length on the "genius" of American politics. He will probably see it as a vindication of his theory if America is ruled after 1980 by the former quarterback of the Buffalo Bills and a former Trotskyist.

Those who still long for a politics of social solidarity and moral seriousness can see few if any hopeful signs in the current moonscape of American politics. However, despairing attempts by such people to accommodate to or sympathetically "explain" the new conservative consensus will only strengthen its hold. It is the task of the democratic left to attack energetically those aspects of American life that continue to distinguish ours from a civilized society.

By so doing, the left may also provide some support to its allies in Congress, who are just now greatly in need of any evidence that the U.S. still contains at least some inhabitants who care about justice. □

Robert Lekachman

Tax Nonsense, Conservative Style

Howard Jarvis stumps the country preaching salvation through lower taxes. One of the country's best congressmen, Don Fraser, loses to a millionaire convert to the same gospel, and Vice President Mondale travels to his home state to urge his fellow Democrats to back the winner in memory of Hubert and in deference to him. In a state of panic, politicians of both parties hustle the voters with less and less credible assurances that they and only they can be depended upon to shrink the tax bills of the public. It's all so simple. Lower taxes mean more economic growth and a return to the Golden Age of annual, automatic improvement in practically every family's standard of life.

Our saviors, once their hearts are uplifted and their purses fattened, are of course the business community and their affluent allies. They take the risks, make the investments, gamble on new processes and products, and in enriching themselves, confer modest prosperity upon the rest of us. We show no more than proper gratitude when we encourage Congress and the President to lighten imposts on capital gains, soften the bite of the minimum income tax, reduce still further the progressivity of personal income-tax schedules, and shave a few percentage points off corporate profits levies. Public-spirited as the men at the head of our great corporations notoriously are, they do get discouraged by the exactions of the Internal Revenue Service.

AS FAIRY TALES GO, this one ranks comparatively high. I suppose that its current fashion requires a few words of comment. As I have just noted, the usual justification for rewarding the rich is the hope that their prosperity will trickle down to the remainder of the community. *How much encouragement do the rich need?* The fact is that Americans are less burdened than the residents of most other advanced communities. Only Switzerland and Japan inflict lighter taxes than the United States. The Dutch, Swedes, French, British, West Germans, Canadians, and Italians all pay more. Seven countries, including the exemplary West Germans, start taxes on personal incomes at rates higher than our 14 percent. Five stop at rates

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higher than our top figure. According to an authoritative Brookings study, the American tax system is, except at the very top and the very bottom, roughly proportional. The poor and the rich pay slightly higher percentages of gross income than the vast majority. By world criteria, Americans get off lightly.

Moreover, since the early 1960s the trend has been in the direction of especially gentle treatment of profits and large individual incomes. At the end of the Korean conflict, personal income-tax rates ranged between 20 and 91 percent. Successive revisions have transformed the numbers to a 14-50 range, covering wages and salaries, and a 14-70 range applicable to income from property. The percentage of federal revenues derived from taxes on corporate profits has steadily declined. So many loopholes have been thoughtfully written into the tax code that some of our largest multinationals pay almost no taxes. One of the reasons why Citibank, Chase, and the other major New York money-market banks lost interest in municipal securities and thus precipitated the 1975 local crisis was the abundance of tax-avoidance devices otherwise available. No need to hold as many New York City bonds and notes so long as other modes of sheltering earnings were available.

AS A LATE Russian leader put it, shrimps will whistle on the day Mobil and Exxon devote their expensive ads to accurate depictions of the tax scene. Self-interest as usual explains much of the business and media clamor for tax relief. Still, self-interest requires respectable intellectual covering. Such as it is, the case for aiding the unneedy begins with the hypothesis that the world as perceived by potential investors is riskier than it used to be. If money is to be gambled, the punters must be assured of a golden jackpot for the winners. Corporate planners, pondering speculative outlays on research and development, plant retooling, and product innovation will take more chances when the corporation stands to keep more of the profits. For similar reasons, rich individuals will buy new corporate securities only if they get to keep the bulk of the capital gains on their more successful ventures.

As hordes of analysts have tiresomely written, the weakness of the present recovery, the disappointing failure of productivity to improve, and the persistence of unemployment, all stem from a rate of capital formation less wholesome than is typical of business-cycle expansions. Investment appears to be a no-win proposition. Investors suffer the losses from ill-advised decisions. Winnings must be shared in discouraging percentages with the voracious tax collectors.

And, just to make matters worse, congressional and executive profligacy have combined to crowd private borrowers out of credit markets. The crowding-out plaint, a favorite of the egregious William Simon, stresses the undoubted fact that the Treasury finances federal deficits, recently in the $50-60 billion range, by selling notes, bills, and bonds to individuals and institutions in the private sector. These are sums that would otherwise be available and at lower rates of interest to corporate borrowers for productive purposes.

Tax cutters and budget balancers appear superficially at odds with each other. In a stunning ideological coup, the two groups have been reconciled by the magic of the Laffer curve and its legislative embodiment, the Kemp-Roth proposal to slash federal taxes by a third over a three-year period. Congressman Jack Kemp, who only a few years ago was throwing footballs for the Buffalo Bills, is one of the hottest Republican properties, mentioned by admirers as a 1980 Republican presidential possibility. In a party that treats Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford as major figures there is no reason for an ex-quarterback to be needlessly humble.

Laffer emphasizes the truism that tax rates, set too high, will discourage effort and promote so much evasion that actual receipts at punitive levels will generate less revenue than more humane alternatives. From this unexceptional platitude, Kemp and Roth have extracted some breathtaking inferences. The first seems to be a suggestion that existing rates are prohibitively high. Laffer himself concedes that the point is speculative. The second is an econometric flight of fancy, a promise that, relieved of tax oppression, talented, energetic, and avaricious individuals will invest with abandon and work with unwonted enthusiasm. No longer compressed by the weight of taxes, the springs of enterprise will be released. Over the horizon is a noninflationary era of full employment, better things for better living, smaller government and unbounded individual freedom. Oh, incidentally, after a short pause tax receipts will rebound to previous levels and beyond. Lower rates applied to a much larger tax base will work this magic.

ALL OF THIS is dangerous nonsense. During the 1970s, capital formation has been sluggish in *all* the

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developed nations, whether like Japan they are kind to capitalists, or like Sweden egalitarian in tax policy, or somewhere between. The reasons for this semistrike by capital are nearly as numerous as the theorists, an essay for another occasion. For present purposes, it suffices to repeat that American taxes are on the low side, the tax code is especially kind to business, and the attempt to explain a puzzling global phenomenon by an inaccurate representation of domestic policies intellectually shoddy.

Has the Treasury really crowded out the private borrowers? Well, last September *Business Week*, no enemy of free enterprise, concluded that our 545 largest corporations had accumulated $80 billion in unused, ready cash. In the words of Nicholas von Hoffman, *"The boys have got the money, only they won't spend it."* On current form, what the boys do spend flows either overseas or into acquisitions of smaller companies.

The Laffer curve and Kemp-Roth are too much for that devoted (but intelligent) conservative Herbert Stein who found himself opposing them in the rare and presumably unwelcome company of Walter Heller. Since, as Stein observed, comparatively little unused factory capacity remains available, a tax cut of $50-60 billion each year will vastly enlarge consumer spending and impart a decidedly unneeded additional impetus to inflation. It is a matter of sheerest conjecture whether these tax cuts just might some time in the future, over the rainbow, evoke the greater investments and individual efforts that these partisans of free lunch anticipate. Much more likely is a scary inflation, which frightens the Federal Reserve into the sort of monetary policies that precipitate a disastrous new recession.

There is an additional foreseeable consequence of Kemp-Roth. Any reduction of taxes threatens social programs. Conservatives like Milton Friedman who did support Proposition 13 and now favor Kemp-Roth do so precisely because their unconcealed major objective is contraction of the public sector and enlargement of the private economy.

NO REPUTABLE REASON exists for new tax benefits to corporations and wealthy individuals. Even more equitable tax reduction is inferior to enlightened use of the same sums on job creation, welfare reform, urban revival, and the beginnings of national health. Kemp-Roth is big medicine among snake oil peddlers because blue- and white-collar workers have been increasingly squeezed between rapid inflation and incomes that often fail to keep pace. It may be that California voters adopted Proposition 13 out of cynical resignation to the belief that they could get a little only by giving a good deal more to their financial betters. The danger is that the whole country will come to the same conclusion. □

Colman McCarthy

"Think Big," and Small, on Taxes

The emerging code word is "big-spending liberal." Voters are sick of government waste, weary of politicians who solve problems by throwing money at them, and bloodied in their hides by vicious tax bites. Liberals, it is being said, are the big spenders and wasters. That a pure-bred of the species like Don Fraser was defeated in Minnesota makes it clear that the villains are being smoked out. At last.

As with all political code words—"law and order," "national security," "peace through preparedness"—a legitimate sentiment is being garbled by shorthand. What is lost in the translation of "big-spending liberals" is that much for the opposite case can be made.

In Congress, it is the knees of hearty conservatives like Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), Carl Curtis (R-Neb.), Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), John Tower (R-Texas), John Rhodes (R-Ariz.), and others that jerk when tapped by the rubber hammer of a money bill for their expensive favorites—weapons, perhaps, or dams, agribusiness subsidies of power plants.

The careers of Goldwater, Curtis, and Tower are

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testimonies to their magical skills at earning reputations as being anti-big spending while having voting records of grand spending for military programs. Being Western-state conservatives, they are bolstered by the image of the cowboy: the self-reliant, hard worker whose boots have those sacred straps by which conservatives love the poor to pull themselves up.

As for the powerful and wealthy—those already standing tall—Western conservatives protect them well through their work on the Senate Finance Committee. Billions of dollars of tax loopholes have been written over the years because Sens. Curtis and Clifford P. Hansen (R-Wyo.) have wielded the largest megaphones when some cheerleading was needed for tax breaks and shelters for the special interests.

If conservative voices are saved for other causes, it is to denounce the "big-spending liberals" who back programs for inner-city housing, civil rights, food stamps, pollution control, or the welfare poor. The contradiction here is that those programs are chronically underfunded. The Children's Defense Fund, for example, is fighting this year for several bills involving more money for education and health.

But even if a few more pennies are squeezed out of Congress, only about 25 percent of the eligible children will be served. It was the same 15 years ago when the Great Society programs began: Legal Services met only 15 percent of the need, Job Corps only 20 percent.

Has it ever been acceptable to fund, say, weapons programs for only 15 or 20 percent of what the armed services committees patriotically define as the need?

The message from this mix of ironies and contradictions is that you are a big spender if you want to lay out government money for people, but you are fiscally responsible if you pump money into weapons, dams, nuclear power plants. You are a screwy-headed liberal if you want money for projects to feed children or to clean the filthy air. If you want more nuclear aircraft carriers or missiles, you are everything a fine American cowboy should be: tough, hard-talking, and not one to be shoved around by the effete feds in Washington.

Much of this is almost laughable: the Goldwaters and Curtises in costume as fiscal watchdogs, when offstage they are lapdogs of the special interests. But the trouble is, by whipping up the public to go after the Don Frasers, a national discussion is less and less possible on the full issue of spending and taxes. Three searching questions are being asked by citizens: How do we stop inflation? How much of our total income should go to government? And what should we spend it on?

Every analysis of Proposition 13 affirms that citizens are willing to think big. Code words about liberal spenders do no more than send the public back beneath its rock with the message "think petty." Look for someone to blame, not someone to follow. And if a leader does emerge—perhaps a president who dares cut money for useless water projects or defies the military by halting funds for a bomber—cut him down to size. Then, with everyone thinking petty together, we won't notice how small we have become. □

Harold Meyerson

Brown's California—After Proposition 13

The choice confronting California voters in November's gubernatorial election was between Jarvis hip and Jarvis square. Both unconventional Jerry Brown and bland Evelle Younger, the Republican challenger, ran a campaign of cutbacks each proclaiming his commitment to a constitutional "spending limitation," attacking his opponent for "overspending," preaching the gospel of cheaper is better, less is more. Each even had his own Howard Jarvis commercial endorsement, and by election day, the injudicious or merely unlucky television viewer was likely to have seen Jarvis commending both Younger ("who brilliantly defended Proposition 13 before the State Supreme Court") and Brown ("Sure, I wrote Proposition 13, but it took a dedicated governor to make it work"). Few political dialogues have so closely approached

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a monologue, few have offered so little hope to those most in need of public services.

For the figures are in on the condition of California's welfare state after only five months of "making Proposition 13 work," and they make melancholy reading, both in themselves and in what they portend. Despite a $5 billion bailout from Sacramento, Jarvis-Gann has cut deeply into municipal services. Over the past decade, California's 417 cities have had an average yearly increase in expenditures of 11.4 percent; in their first post-13 budgets, that increase fell to 4.6 percent—a little over half the annual inflation rate. The comparable figures for California's 58 counties are an 11.3 percent average increase over the last 10 years, a 5.3 percent increase this year.

The cutbacks made by the municipalities (or mandated by the state as a condition for receiving the bailout) fall into two categories: "unessential" services, with particular emphasis on cultural and recreational activities, and any services that disproportionately benefit the powerless. Apparently, libraries are widely regarded as the most frivolous (or dangerous) cultural amenity. All 81 of Los Angeles County's branch libraries are now closed on Mondays; Los Angeles City libraries have moved their closing time from 9 to 8 P.M.; smaller cities have closed their branch libraries; every library department in the state has had its book-purchasing funds cut at least in half; some have no funds for purchases at all. While libraries are generally forbidden to charge for their services, museums are not: the Los Angeles County Museums of Art and of Natural History both have instituted admission fees, with resulting declines in attendance of 44 and 62 percent, respectively. San Bernardino County parks, formerly open seven days a week, now are open five; Berkeley has flatly eliminated its Recreation and Community Arts departments; the state grows darker as street lighting is reduced in many cities; the city of Oakland has managed to abolish an office and eliminate any prospect of citizen complaint in one and the same act: it has closed down its City Hall switchboard.

The sharpest cuts have come at the expense of the most vulnerable. While cities and counties have had their spending *increases* limited to 5 percent, the budgets of California's schools have *declined* by 2.3 percent—the first decline in school spending since 1934. Summer schools have been abolished for the foreseeable future. Dial-a-Ride programs for the elderly and disabled have been discontinued in some smaller cities. Mental health programs have suffered in most cities; and the mentally ill admitted on an emergency basis to Los Angeles public hospitals have endured day-long waits in jail before the proper facilities could be made available. The 1.5 million recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children received no cost-of-living increases this year. State and local government employees had their cost-of-living increases abrogated at the Governor's insistence, although they subsequently managed to wrest from the Legislature a whopping 1 percent raise.

Since the passage of Jarvis, both state and local governments have been devising alternate means of collecting revenues, but the plans that have been enacted have been preponderantly regressive. The most notably progressive suggestion—to abolish homeowner property taxes altogether but restore taxes on commercial property to 90 percent of pre-Jarvis levels—was cut down in the Legislature by the open opposition of conservatives and the veiled hostility of the Governor. The most widely instituted regressive levy has been the pay-at-the-door user fee, which scores of municipalities have imposed not only on visitors to museums and parks but also on those who call ambulances or paramedics.

It could all get much worse very quickly. As yet, "only" 5,000 public employees have been laid off in the state; but if the wage freeze imposed by Sacramento in violation of union contracts is overturned by the high court (it has already been ruled invalid in lower courts), layoffs could rise a hundredfold. Nor is there any guarantee that the state will continue to amass the kind of surplus that enabled it to rebate $5 billion to localities this year. A recession could wipe out both the surplus and much of what remains of municipal services. In the interim, a state-imposed hiring freeze is contributing to a reduction in public services; and where the hiring freeze can be eluded, the wage freeze has put public institutions into a non-competitive position with their private counterparts.

BAD AS 13's socioeconomic consequences may be, its effect on the political climate has been even more dismal. The one exception to this rule stems from the inadvertent conversion of the state into a laboratory for the failures of trickle-down economics. For while Proposition 13 rebated over $4 billion to corporations and landlords, prices and, more spectacularly, rents have continued to

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rise. One result has been the first significant tenant movement in the history of the state. The Los Angeles City Council has been forced to enact an unprecedented six-month rent rollback and freeze, and rent-control ordinances were placed on the November ballot in San Francisco, Berkeley, Palo Alto, Davis, and Santa Cruz—a list suggesting students may at least be developing a tenant consciousness. (On the other hand, the agency established to enforce the rollback in Los Angeles's 638,000 rental units has a staff of seven: tenant protection, Jarvis-style.)

IN A SIMILAR vein, the only corporations that have passed along their rebates to consumers are regulated monopolies forced to do so by the Public Utilities Commission. One inescapable lesson of the Jarvis experiment is that trickle-down has worked only where government has intervened to make it work.

But the preeminent political consequence of Jarvis fever is the supplanting of liberalism by Brownism, a doctrine that the Governor defined in the October 23, 1978, issue of *Time*: "It's what I call mixing frugality with compassion," Brown stated. "Anti-red lining, antismog regulations, and farm labor laws—all these are compatible with a fairly hard fiscal policy." Certainly, Brownism itself is compatible with political popularity: it has enabled him to outflank his Republican opposition on both the left and the right.

On one hand, Brown has imposed freezes on wages, hiring, welfare benefits; he has enacted by executive order a state spending limit; and a recent statewide poll has shown the public favoring Brown over Younger by 26 percent when asked which of them would do a better job cutting government waste. On the other hand—and this is an accomplishment that eluded Dukakis and continues to elude Carter—Brown has been able to move right without substantially alienating the bulk of his progressive support. The labor movement had been held in his camp by his extension of collective-bargaining rights to farmworkers and public employees and by his many prolabor appointments. He has also used his appointment power to secure the support of the women's movement and minorities: 30 percent of his 2,800 appointments have gone to women, 23 percent to minorities. The Haydenistas have been wooed by his commitment to solar energy; indeed, the only politically visible groups to have bailed out on Brown this time around were a number of the wage-frozen public employee unions and the ADA.

But if Brownism is a stunning success as a political strategy, it is ultimately self-negating as an ideology. For the very premise of Brownism—that policies of fiscal conservatism and social liberalism can be promoted simultaneously—has been refuted time and again during Brown's tenure as governor. Even before 13's passage turned public policy overtly against the young, the old, and the poor, the fiscal conservatism of the Brown administration had given rise to episodes of extraordinary social meanness. The linchpin of that conservatism in pre-13 days was Brown's unwillingness to spend any of the state surplus (which was reaching $6 billion) on job creation, even though the state's unemployment rate was steadily 1 percent higher than the nation's. Yet it was precisely this climate of scarce jobs and withheld public funds that fostered the Yellow Peril scare campaign against immigrant Vietnamese refugees (a campaign orchestrated by the Brown administration lest it have to foot the bill); that engendered the barbaric policy still prevalent in some sections of the state of denying hospital facilities to sick or injured undocumented workers; that has given rise to one of the foulest pieces of social legislation in years: the Briggs initiative to remove gays and those who support their rights from the shrinking teaching market. Brownism's *reductio ad absurdum* was reached last summer when Brown signed into law a bill granting collective-bargaining rights to community college staff workers—rights that had already been abrogated by the "fairly hard fiscal policy" of the Jarvis bailout wage freeze that Brown himself had devised.

That Brownism is self-contradictory is not to deny (and perhaps is to assert) its appeal. For the message of Brownism is simply this: that you can be liberal and concerned and hip and not have to pay for it; that public expectations can and should be lowered and personal aspirations raised without injury to conscience; that the marriage of self-indulgence and social penury that defines the '70s will not damage a perilously fragile society. It is a warm and comforting lie.

Postscript

November 9

THE RENT CONTROL MEASURES passed in Berkeley and Davis were defeated elsewhere. □

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Bernard Avishai

Israeli Nerves After Camp David

The following letter from Jerusalem was written at a moment when it seemed all but certain that the Camp David agreement would lead to a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. As we make up this issue, that is decidedly less certain. We hope, of course, that a treaty will soon be signed; but whatever the outcome of the current impasse in negotiations, we think that Bernard Avishai's description of the Israeli scene remains valuable.—EDS.

Jerusalem, November 15

Israeli Jews assume diplomacy to be less the art of the possible than the ritual forestalling of disaster. This is, I suppose, a subtle distinction. Still, it helps to account for Israelis' earnest celebration of the Camp David agreement despite their skeptical attitude toward its provisions.

Consider the polls. Almost four-fifths of Israelis polled in September endorsed the two framework documents, and an even larger number approved the performance of the political leadership that engineered the compromise. Ninety-two percent approved the comportment of Defense Minister Weizman, who is most identified with the American-backed land for peace strategy in the Sinai.

Such endorsements should, however, not be construed as support only for the obviously seductive peace with Egypt: Camp David's autonomy plan for the Palestinians (i.e., the recognition of their "legitimate rights," the termination of the military government and corresponding dependence on Jordanian police to keep the peace on the West Bank, the contraction of the IDF to 6,000 troops in specified enclaves, the plan's "transitional character," the seeming discouragement of new Jewish settlements) all were contrived to accommodate the goals of the Brookings report, not Likud's platform, and most Israelis seem to know it. In fact, over 50 percent expect that the plan will lead to an independent Palestinian state in spite of Begin's assurances to the contrary. They have learned (what better teacher could they have had than Begin himself) that they cannot, and should not, defy American interests in Egypt and the Gulf, nor foil American designs on Syria. Nor do they now doubt—particularly after Undersecretary Saunders's explicit clarificiations for Hussein and some Palestinians—that the Carter administration views an effectively instituted autonomy plan as the hinge on its own long-term policy in the area. So Israelis cannot but consider Camp David to be a comprehensive diplomatic agenda that might eventually establish Israel's status in the Middle East and in global affairs.

Yet, it is precisely when Israelis are pressed to speculate on developments entailed by their own broader views that they are most troubled. Over 60 percent expressed doubt that a comprehensive peace would finally be concluded. Tens of thousands demonstrated their apprehensions still more graphically by jamming the beaches of Sinai over the Succot holidays, as if to prepare for another prolonged struggle with claustrophobia. Even the promise of peace with Egypt—Israelis have compulsively recited the good arguments for it to themselves since the first disengagement agreement in 1974—seems no less fragile and fantastic today, for all of Sadat's reassuring consistency and Begin's reassuring inconsistency. These common suspicions are not groundless. Israel's signing of a peace treaty with Egypt will do little more than consolidate and extend the reciprocal interests that had evolved between them since Kissinger's shuttles (Israeli intelligence, remember, has served more than once both Egypt and the royal Saudi family against the conspiracies of Soviet clients, e.g., Libya). These reciprocal interests of Israel and Egypt are complemented by extensive political and journalistic contact between citizens of the two countries since President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. Such a peace treaty is not a small achievement. But progress toward full normal relations, Israelis instinctively know, will continue to be impeded by the Palestinian issue about which Begin and Sadat remain ideologically incompatible and to which each leader seems more vulnerable at home.

Begin will not want to negotiate away Jewish claims, however tendentious, to the West Bank and Gaza. He has been promoting Camp David among his hard-line allies in Israel as a separate peace, which will permit him to avoid doing so. He has not prepared the Israeli public for further concessions. Sadat can, in practice, remain aloof from Palestinian demands for an independent state, but he cannot repudiate such demands nor be openly reconciled to an Israel that does. He has, with

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Carter's encouragement, been promoting Camp David as the foundation of a comprehensive peace: both are eager to entice Hussein and West Bank Palestinians to participate in the autonomy plan and thus ensure that this plan will yield the alternative Palestinian leadership it was conceived to evolve: both are eager to secure Saudi patience. Sadat is also expecting American pressure on Israel to continue to serve as the operative link between the Israeli-Egyptian peace and Palestinian autonomy and to prevent any further Jewish encroachments on Arab areas of historic Palestine. The framework agreements thus provide the makings of an intense test of strength between the Israeli Prime Minister and American leaders with, Israelis readily understand, the issue of Jewish settlements in "Judea and Samaria" dominating and subverting bilateral relations between Israel and Egypt.

Begin would have the support of his current coalition to reject any suspension of settlement activity; otherwise he will face a crisis within the coalition. He had to order the "thickening" of existing settlements during the negotiations with Egypt in order to preempt the impending revolt of seven Herut and National Religious party ministers. Begin could probably overcome such future difficulties by calling an election soon after the pact with Egypt is signed. His support from the majority of the Likud—i.e., from the more sycophantic members of Herut, the doveish Liberal faction, etc.—is firm, and he could increase his hold on the growing Israeli center by digesting Yigael Yadin's weakened "Democratic Movement" and purging the Likud of frenetic and chauvinist hawks such as Geula Cohen and Moshe Shamir. There is little doubt that Begin would win a substantial parliamentary majority were he to adopt this strategy and, along with Dayan and Weizman, commit the country to the peace process he helped to initiate. He would not get much of a fight from the Labor party, which is still hopelessly divided under the unlikely leadership of Shimon Peres, Dayan's old political fixer who, were pedigrees to count, would also be more at home in the Likud. Besides, Labor never delivered a peace treaty during the "ancien régime" and it is not clear that moderates within the party would ever have been able to do so if Begin remained in command of the opposition. Even now, Labor-affiliated agrarian movements are agitating for the protection of their settlements in North Sinai, the Golan, and the West Bank.

But Begin's unprecendented political independence may be beside the point: his potentially decisive contribution to peace may be confounded, not by the opposition of others, but by his own conscience. He is a man whose pragmatic conclusions with regard to the North Sinai settlements, Palestinian rights, etc., are still inconsistent with his transcendental premises. The Nobel-anointed prestige of the peacemaker, in which he seems to genuinely delight, may not finally attract him as much as the birthright—which, he thinks, the Americans would induce him to sell for a mess of pottage.

THESE PROBLEMS CONSIDERED—and Israelis consider them—it is still an open question whether Palestinian autonomy can be put into practice at all or whether Israeli-Egyptian peace can thrive in its absence. Palestinian leaders in the West Bank and Gaza (Kawasme, Shawa, and even pro-Jordanians such as Freji) have already declared that they will not participate unless they receive assurances in advance that autonomy will ultimately produce a Palestinian state. Begin may never agree to such a prospect, but he will certainly not do so now, that is, while the PLO, to which virtually all West Bank leaders defer, refuses to renounce terror against Israeli civilians, let alone accept the terms of the Camp David agenda. One may argue that West Bank leaders are impeachably shortsighted. Were they to accept autonomy they would quickly preside over a political faction greater than any combination of Jewish settlements and would be in an excellent position to press for full independence, achieve international recognition, and, given a manifest demonstration of peaceful intentions toward Israel and Jordan, earn the goodwill of the Carter administration. They might, like Sadat, even earn the goodwill of the Israeli public. One might also argue that Begin and Dayan encourage Palestinian rejectionism—perhaps deliberately—by dismissing even the principle of Palestinian self-determination and promising new West Bank settlements to boot. That such displays of bad faith are equivalent is of little consolation to those in Israel for whom peace has become a tangible hope and Camp David, they fear, an elaborate trap. Israelis do not fear renewed Egyptian involvement in a pan-Arab, pro-Palestinian Jihad. But this was not their fear before Camp David in light of Egypt's permanent interests. Israelis are concerned, rather, that they have exchanged "no war" for a peace that can be reversed, particularly if the apparent

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rapprochement between Syria and Iraq leads to renewed fighting on the Golan and in Lebanon.

After all, an Egyptian embassy in Jerusalem may be instructed to galvanize the Palestinians and to transmit ultimatums. And this is an expensive, reversible peace. The strategic concessions that Israel made at Camp David were insignificant: settlements are worthless in the face of modern weaponry, and a demilitarized Sinai is as good as one controlled by the Israeli army, maybe better. But the down-payment on peace that was extracted from Israel at the summit—i.e., the net cost of rebuilding the army and air bases in the Negev, the loss of Sinai oil revenues, the compensation to settler families, etc.—constitute a huge projected drain on Israel's budget (more than $4 billion). Such expenditures hit hardest the already hard-pressed, inflation-cursed wage-earners who seem to be the only ones paying taxes nowadays. These are expenditures that would seem justified only if they were a prelude to the opening of the Egyptian market to Israeli manufactured goods, professional services, and technology, and if defense costs could be substantially reduced. This is just what Camp David seems *not* to promise. The Palestinian issue appears to keep the whole deal in jeopardy, while Israel's economic hardships, and nerve-racking dependence on American aid, continue to grow.

Nevertheless, I think there is a danger of underestimating the progress that was made at Camp David on this most abrasive question, particularly if we ignore the summit's less perceptible but substantial effect on each side's political discourse. Prior to the accords there existed no definite political program to which moderate Palestinians—i.e., those angling for a Palestinian state at peace alongside Israel—could honorably subscribe without laying themselves open to charges of defeatism and treachery. This is no longer the case: the letter of the framework agreement provides for the creation of an evolving Palestinian self-determination, which even those close to the PLO may help to fashion. Correspondingly, Israeli moderates—and, it turns out, there are many when events engender optimism—are now in a postion to argue for the preservation of an established peace, for which the terms were negotiated by muscular nationalists. The moderates no longer need hesitate to attack the "realistic" image of monolithic Arab enmity and perpetual war.

MORE TO THE POINT—and this may be Camp David's most significant result—the annexationist logic of Gush Emunim and the Land of Israel movement (settlements equal land equals security equals Zionism equals Redemption) has been ruptured by a stroke of Begin's pen. No doubt, intense resistance to further withdrawals of settlements or to the suspension of plans for new ones will persist: the West Bank elicits much more passion than the Sinai, not only from Scripture hawks, but also for the more reactionary wings of the old labor movement (Tnuat Hamoshavim, Kibbutz Hameuchad, etc.). These people view the prospect of retarded settlement as further evidence of their having been swamped by the urban, bourgeois, and largely Sephardic "other Israel" that swept the Likud into power in the last election, and who are further demoralized by the collapse of their own self-congratulatory equation of national security with collective pioneering in the West Bank and the Golan. Nevertheless, the animus driving annexationist sentiment has been quelled. Israelis have shown that they can be pushed in for a penny and they will be pushed in also for a pound. Such, at least, is the hope of the urbane and cerebral young officers of "Peace Now" who are broadly seen to have been vindicated by the actions of Israeli leaders at Camp David and who now personify the "national consensus" in Israeli editorials more readily than the messianic settlers of Gush Emunim.

Golda Meir, who greeted the news from Camp David with thoughtless indignation, complained that she could have made "a peace like that" long ago. Not the least important consequence of the summit is that most Israelis are asking themselves why she did not. These accords have produced, not a revolution in Israel, but something like a gestalt switch: Judea and Samaria, Begin's disclaimers notwithstanding, have again become the West Bank, the Arabs of Eretz Yisrael have become Palestinians, and the oil-thirsty gentiles in Washington have become the pillars of the Free World. It remains to be seen if responsible Palestinian leaders have the courage and guile to reinforce such images before they are blown apart by some terrorist's bomb. □

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Ignazio Silone

Visit to a Prisoner

Of all the writers of our century, Ignazio Silone (1900-1978) was in some ways the closest to us. If not perhaps ideologically, then in the depths of his experience and work. He had come out of the Italian socialist movement, had joined for a time with Gramsci and Bordiga to form the Italian Communist movement, had broken from the CP as it became Stalinized, and then devoted the remainder of his life to writing, yet also with intermittent participation in the Italian socialist movement revived after the Second World War.

In everything he wrote there is the same rebellion against injustice, the same tone of fraternal and undeluded humaneness. Whatever was best in the socialist tradition, surviving dogmas and certainties, found a home in his books—in Fontamara, *that stirring fable of Italian peasant revolt; in* Bread and Wine, *that greatest of all imaginative works about the aftermath of socialist defeat; in* The School for Dictators, *a brilliant dialogue on the nature of authoritarianism. And in the later, more problematic fictions too.*

His socialism became more and more a matter of ethics, a sort of desacrilized version of Christianity, "an affirmation," as he wrote, "of the priority of the human person above all the economic and social mechanisms which oppress him."

Over the years he wrote to, and sometimes for, us in the friendliest spirit. In times of isolation and beleaguerment it was good to know that in Rome there was this man of irritable friendliness, warm and sardonic, who shared some of our hopes even if he did not always accept our words. Over the years he came to stand for the survival of the kernel of socialist values, that which had made millions of people in the last century choose to reject the given. He had friends throughout the world, friends whom he knew and friends he had never met, and to them Silone spoke for that which, in a time of ideological disburdenment, they wished to preserve.

Perhaps there have been greater writers in the 20th century, but to me there has been none who yielded so strong a feeling of comradeship. The few times I met him in Rome we leaped across the barriers of language and culture, for we had shared an experience of aspiration, defeat, and renewal that was stronger than word or custom.

As a token of our love and respect, we reprint here one of Silone's slighter pieces, yet utterly characteristic in its tone of wry friendliness, its tacit probing of the sources of his—and others'—rebellion.

—I.H.

A small, barefoot, ragged little man, handcuffed between two policemen, was proceeding by fits and starts along the dusty deserted street, as if to the rhythm of a painful dance, perhaps because he was lame or wounded in the foot. Between the two uniformed figures, whose faces looked like death masks in the harsh summer light, the little man had an air of earthy vitality about him, like an animal who had been captured in some ditch. He had a bundle on his back that made a noise like a cicada every time he moved.

This pitiful, farcical sight approached as I was seated on the front stoop with my spelling book on my knees. I was having my first difficulties with vowels and consonants, and here was an unexpected distraction that made me laugh. I looked around for someone to enjoy it with me, and at that moment, from inside the house, I heard my father's heavy footsteps.

"Look how funny he is!" I said to him with a laugh.

My father looked severely at me, dragged me to my feet by the ear and led me to his room. I had never seen him so angry at me.

"What have I done wrong?" I asked him, rubbing my injured ear.

"Never make fun of a man who's been arrested! Never!"

"Why not?"

"Visit to a Prisoner," translated by Harvey Ferguson II in *Emergency Exit* by Ignazio Silone, Volume 39, World Perspectives, planned and edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen. Copyright © 1968 by Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

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"Because he can't defend himself. And because he may be innocent. In any case because he's unhappy."

Without saying anything more, he left me alone in the room, the victim of a new kind of torment. Vowels and consonants, with their complicated combinations, no longer interested me.

That evening, instead of sending me to bed at the usual time, my father took me to town with him, something which happened only rarely. And instead of staying with his friends at the Farmers' League as he usually did, he went to sit at a table in front of the "gentlemen's" café, where the town's leading citizens were enjoying the cool breeze after a hot day. At the next table, the judge was talking with the municipal doctor.

"What is that man they arrested today accused of?" my father asked the judge, with whom he was on good terms.

"He stole something," answered the judge.

"Where's the thief from? Is he a vagabond? Is he out of work?" my father asked again.

"He's a laborer at the brick factory, and it seems he stole something from the manager," answered the judge. "Did he steal something from you too?"

"That's strange," said my father. "Barefoot and in rags as he was, he looked more like a victim than a thief."

The sight of poor people handcuffed between policemen was common enough on the street where we lived because all prisoners arrested in the villages in our countryside had to pass that way. And they had to walk since there was no other way to transport them.

The old part of our town was backed up against a mountain and was overlooked by the ruins of an ancient castle. It consisted of a great rabbit warren of black peasant huts, stables for the animals carved out of the rock, a couple of churches and some uninhabited mansions. But with the increase in population in the last few years, the town was expanding into the valley on both banks of the river, and our street was the principal road to the plain and the Fucino Valley, where the draining of the lake had made available lots of good rich land. It was a street of intense and noisy traffic. Not having a durable roadbed, it changed appearance with the seasons. It was as treacherous and irregular as the bed of a torrent, and it looked like a wide country road with its numerous ruts, full of mud or snow in the winter and of blinding dust in the summer. The houses along the street, most of them two-storied, were unable to protect themselves from the dust or the noise. They even added to it since their occupants were mostly craftsmen plying their trades.

At the first light of dawn, there began on our street the daily procession of goats, sheep, donkeys, mules, cows, wagons of every description and use, and peasants, making their way down to the plain for the day's work. And every evening until late the same procession of men and animals passed in the opposite direction, showing clear signs of fatigue. In the intervening hours, the space in front of the houses was occupied by the craftsmen—carpenters, shoemakers, smiths, tinkers, wagoners, coopers, and dyers, with the tools of their trade—while long rows of small carts loaded with "red earth" and pulled by mules passed up the street. The "red earth" was extracted by very primitive means from an exhausted bauxite mine dug out of a nearby mountain, and it was on its way to the railroad. No one in our town knew where it was going. Very often, when the weather was bad, one of those wagons got stuck in a rut hidden by the mud. Then the whole column of "red earth" would halt for hours, among the shouts and curses of the carters.

A few years later my father consented to take me with him to Fucino for the first time. This was an important event for me. I had the sensation, all of a sudden, of having become a man. I woke up in the morning when it was still dark, but he had already prepared the oxen and had the wagon drawn up in front of the door of the house. I was also astonished to hear the sound of the loom in the weaving room. Was my mother at work already? She soon came to keep me company while I had my coffee and milk; and she gave me a bit of advice. I remember that she strongly warned me not to sit in the sun once I got to the Fucino Valley. "A lot of people get sunstroke the first time they go out in the country," she said. Then she went with me to the wagon. Every detail added to my anxiety. In the pallid light of dawn, the large shape of the oxen, the crude simplicity of the things loaded up for the day—the plow, the sack of hay, the flasks of water and wine, and the basket of food—and the customary but unexpected crowing of the rooster appeared to me portents of the seriousness of the life into which I was about to be admitted. We had to leave so early because it was about five miles to the middle of the Fucino Valley, where our farmland was located. It was advisable for both us and the oxen to get there before the sun was too high.

An ox cart, obviously, moves about as fast as a man walks. But the slow pace suited my state of

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mind: that of a boy admitted for the first time to the life of adults. I was watching the peasants in front and in back of us in the line of wagons and animals, and I was trying to act as they did, hiding my emotion. It struck me that even good friends greeted each other with barely a nod of the head. It was a working day and there was no time to stand on ceremony. Nor was I disturbed that my father, lost in thought, said nothing, showing that as far as he was concerned I was no longer a child. One unexpected discovery for me was the view of our town I had as I turned back from the plain. I had never seen it as a whole before, outside myself, with its own valley. I hardly recognized it: a pile of houses jumbled together in a crack in the barren mountain.

As we slowly came into the plain, the crowd of peasants, wagons, mules and donkeys dispersed to the right and left, until we were almost alone. It was only then that my father realized that he had not brought along any tobacco. From the way he acted, I understood that this must be a very serious oversight. How could he spend the whole day in that hot air without smoking? Not even the poorest peasant could make this sacrifice.

The sun was already high and we were too far into the Fucino Valley to think of turning back. I felt especially mortified that my father kept repeating, "I've never forgotten something like that! Never!" Was it my fault then? I was horrified at the thought. My memorable day had suddenly darkened. When we got to the field, my father loosened the oxen from the cart and hitched them to the plow, without saying a word, without even looking at me. The long, dusty, poplar-lined road was deserted, as were the rectangles of fields near ours. There was no hope of finding a friend who would give up some of his tobacco. My father was starting the oxen off behind the plow when he called me.

"Take this coin," he said, "and offer it to everyone who passes in exchange for a cigar or a pinch of snuff."

The sun was already high, and it was unlikely that anyone was still on the road. My father took off his jacket, lifted the iron goad and urged on the oxen in an angry voice. Depressed, I sat on the grassy bank of the canal which separated the field from the road. I could see my father bent over the plow behind the oxen, fading slowly away, then coming back, then going off again, tracing straight, ashen furrows in the earth blackened by burned stubble. The plowing went on silently and regularly, even though the sun was beginning to burn. Around the edge of the field, the gigantic poplars formed a barrier unmoved by a breath of wind. The waters of the canal were turbid, immobile, stagnant. Although I was seated in the shade, I could hardly breathe. I was seized with a vague sense of nausea and sleepiness. I was thinking it would have been better if I had stayed home. But about noon my father's voice roused me from my stupor. A man riding on a small donkey was coming along the road in our direction. It seemed as if he and his donkey were being carried along by the low dense cloud which raised the invisible feet of the animal from the ground. I ran up to him, showed him the coin and proposed the trade, pointing out my father, who had stopped with the oxen halfway along the furrow. The man was a very poor-looking farmer. He had on a few dirty rags which left some of his body exposed, and he was wearing some broken-down shoes tied with pieces of twine.

"I haven't got a whole cigar," he answered me. "Just about half a one."

"Fine," I said to him, running along beside the donkey, "take this and give me what you have, please."

"And why should I go the whole day without a smoke?" he answered, "Why's your father better than me?"

"My father's no better than you are," I explained. "But something like this can make him go without speaking until tomorrow."

"Too bad for him," the man answered. "Who'll believe it?"

I continued to trot along beside the donkey, but I was beginning to lose hope. How was I going to get that piece of cigar? I looked at the man with pleading eyes, but he was watching me with a sneer—whether of scorn or pity I could not tell. I had never before been that close to so thin and dried-up a man.

"We've got some nice food in our basket," I told him. "If you like, I'll give you my share. And there's some cool wine from our vineyard. Stop a minute, and come see."

The man couldn't be moved. He even seemed to be enjoying himself. It almost made me cry.

"Please," I was repeating to him. "Please."

"Here," he suddenly said, handing me a bit of cigar. "I'll give it to you."

"You won't accept the money? Why?"

"Either you give half a cigar or you don't."

I did not insist because I was in too much of a

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hurry to make a good impression on my father.

"That's funny," my father said, after I had told him of my good luck with the man. "You should have at least asked his name."

Several years passed. One evening I was sitting on the threshold of the house with the *Fables* of Fedro on my knees, when I saw the very man who had given me the half-cigar passing by, handcuffed between two policemen. I recognized him immediately and my heart almost stopped. I ran to tell my father about it. He was not home yet. I ran to my grandmother. Then I went to the square. No one had seen him. Finally I found my father in the stable, watering the oxen. I must have looked very upset, because as soon as he saw me he asked whether something awful had happened. "Yes," I answered, and I told him whom I had seen.

The next day was a Sunday. After Mass, coming out of the church, I found my father waiting to take me to the judge as we had agreed.

"You tell him about it," said my father. "After all, you're the one who knows the man."

The judge listened with a smile to my short but impassioned account.

"He was arrested because he stole," he explained when I had finished.

I was astonished. To me the stranger looked less like a thief than a violent madman.

"He probably did something the police and the judge think is stealing," my father tried to explain. "But only God knows what he really did."

The judge kindly gave us a card permitting us to visit the man in jail. My name was written on the card too.

"We'll have to take him some little present," my father proposed on the way. "But what?"

"The best thing would be a cigar," I suggested.

"That's an excellent idea," said my father.

I remember every last detail of that visit since it was the first time I had ever been in a place like that. As soon as I set foot inside it, my heart began to beat so fast it hurt. The guard took us to a stinking little room, which was getting a tiny bit of light from a window protected by bars. He showed us an opening in one of the walls at about the height of a man, through which we could talk to the prisoner. I had to stand on tiptoe to see him. How happy I was when he recognized me at first sight.

1965 □

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Theodore Draper

Ghosts of Vietnam

I

The Vietnam war was beyond doubt the most demanding test of American foreign policy and its makers since the Second World War. The war in Vietnam was not just another crisis in 30 years of successive crises; it was by far the most costly and most stultifying. It lasted longer than any other war and ended in the most humiliating failure in American history. It resulted in over 210,000 American casualties, including almost 57,000 dead and over 150,000 wounded. The monetary cost has been officially estimated at from $180 billion to $210 billion. This bill for the war ignores all the indirect costs, such as the corrosive economic inflation it stimulated and the feverish social turmoil it provoked. As for the havoc inflicted on North and South Vietnam, it belongs to a different order of magnitude. No wonder that the memory of Vietnam is so oppressive that Americans seem to want to stuff it away in their collective unconscious.

One might well assume that the present custodians of American foreign policy had been chosen because they were proven right in their judgment of the war. It could come as a surprise that, in order to rise to the top of the post-Vietnam American political system, it was almost necessary to be wrong, hopelessly and certifiably wrong. Yet, in some odd way, this is what happened. The false counsellors were rewarded with more power than they had had before they made their ghastly mistakes about the war.

President Jimmy Carter consistently supported the war and was saved from making his support too conspicuous only by his relative obscurity in national politics. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was another proponent of the war, also sheltered from too much public notice by his inability or unwillingness to speak out very forcefully about anything. Both of them seem to think that it was enough for them to say, "Sorry, folks, we were wrong about the war," to gain political absolution. They were more fortunate than Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski and his predecessor as national security adviser, Dr. Henry Kissinger. Kissinger managed to find bad reasons to support what he knew was a bad war; Brzezinski hit on essentially the same reasons for what he thought was a good war. And now, as the most influential member of his staff and his closest confidant, Brzezinski has with him Professor Samuel P. Huntington, one of the hardest of prowar hardliners and the least repentant.

In one respect, the problem of the Vietnam war resembled that of the Korean war. Since American interests in both Korea and Vietnam were minimal, other reasons had to justify American intervention. In the case of Korea, American policy-makers considered North Korea to be nothing but a Soviet puppet ordered by Moscow to attack South Korea as the opening move in a larger strategy to "probe for the weakness in our armor," as former President Truman put it, in order to start a process of disintegration in the entire American structure of allies and dependents throughout Europe and Asia.

Fighting Russia in Korea was what made the war seem necessary and worthwhile. According to this reasoning, the Soviets should have taken advantage of their success in bogging down the bulk of American armed forces in Korea for three years, particularly at the time of the crushing defeat of General

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MacArthur's forces by Chinese armies across the Yalu River at the end of 1950, which was presumably what the wire-pullers in the Kremlin had been waiting for. Instead, the Korean war increasingly lived a life of its own. The original rationale for getting into it became dimmer and dimmer, and all that remained was to get out of it as gracefully and cheaply as possible. The Korean war turned out essentially to be a *Korean* war, which ultimately made it tangential to America's larger interests and preposterously expensive for what we could get out of it. Whatever the Russian role might have been, and we still know little for sure about it, the Korean war was far more a feint than the real thing.

The Vietnam war followed the same general course. In the beginning, the Truman administration injected itself into the French imbroglio in Indochina with vast amounts of financial assistance and military equipment, ostensibly to bolster French pride and stability and to gain French support for American defense plans in Europe. After the outbreak of the Korean war, the struggle in Indochina took on a wider connotation as part of a worldwide Communist "conspiracy." With the defeat of France in 1954, the Eisenhower administration took over responsibility for South Vietnam, now split off from North Vietnam by the Geneva accords, on the ground that loss of all of Vietnam would inevitably bring about the loss of all the other "dominoes" in Southeast Asia, including Thailand, Malaya, Burma, and Indonesia. In the stage of massive, direct American intervention during the Johnson administration, the real enemy in Vietnam became China, a point of view put forward most extravagantly by then former Vice-President Richard M. Nixon in 1965 and with monumental obtuseness by Secretary of State Dean Rusk in 1966 and afterward. Without superimposing a larger framework on the Korean and Vietnam wars, American policy-makers would have been forced to acknowledge that essentially they were civil wars—civil wars with outside backing but still primarily localized civil wars—and not the opening shot of the Final Conflict. We might still have been drawn into them, but at least we would have known what we were doing and what they were worth to us.

II

How difficult it was to justify American intervention in Vietnam intellectually is strikingly shown by the travail of two outstanding foreign-affairs intellectuals—Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski. If they could not think up better reasons for supporting the war, no one could.

Kissinger's position on the war made its first public appearance in *Look* magazine of August 9, 1966, in the second year of massive American intervention. In an article written after he had made two trips to Vietnam at the invitation of then Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Kissinger set forth two principal propositions. One was that the war could not be won by military means. The other was that it had to be settled by negotiation. In effect, he succeeded in establishing some distance between himself and both the extreme hawks and extreme doves. Kissinger had clearly learned enough during his two tours of Vietnam and from his Pentagon sources to make him extremely cautious about committing himself to anything that might be called "victory."

After outlining this equivocal approach, Kissinger fell silent on the issue of Vietnam for almost two years, an uncharacteristic reticence that his friendly memorialists have had great difficulty explaining.[1]

Kissinger broke his silence on Vietnam in the summer of 1968, by which time even the inner circles of the Johnson administration had given up the war as a lost cause. At a conference on Vietnam in Chicago in June of that year, sponsored by the Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs, Kissinger savagely criticized American policy, especially its "concepts"—military concepts, traditional liberal concepts, balance-of-power concepts, indeed the entire "American philosophy of international relations." If American policy was that bankrupt, one might imagine that the best thing to do would be to get out of the war as soon as possible at

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the least possible cost. But Kissinger did not offer any new concepts or policies himself; he merely called for a "prayerful assessment" of the procedures and concepts that had landed us in such a mess.[2]

Kissinger saved his own conceptual prescription for the speeches that he composed for Governor Nelson Rockefeller in the presidential campaign that summer and for an article in *Foreign Affairs* written in his own name in the same period. The basic idea—or, to use Kissinger's favorite term, "concept"—was that of a negotiated settlement, hardly a novel one at the time. More important were the conditions that Kissinger attached to such a settlement. It had to be arrived at in such a way that it did not shake "confidence in American promises" or compromise American "credibility," "prestige," or "steadiness." The key word was "honorably"—the war had to be ended "honorably." He conceived of doing so by means of a U.S.-Soviet-China "subtle triangle," whereby the United States would improve its relations with the two leading Communist powers and thereby achieve or at least advance an honorable settlement in Vietnam through them.[3]

By this time, the United States in essence had no other stake in Vietnam than its "honor." Here again, the hard questions were evaded. What if the United States could not end the war "honorably" without paying an exorbitant price for the attempt, and then not succeed anyway? What if the road to peace in Vietnam did not run through Russia and China? What if Russia and China themselves were to work at cross purposes in Vietnam and elsewhere? Kissinger's honorable settlement in Vietnam was fitted into his rickety new "global, conceptual approach," which presupposed that Russia and China could restrain North Vietnam and that the Thieu regime in South Vietnam could be made capable of defending itself without American armed forces. Without these presuppositions, it would have made no sense for the Nixon-Kissinger policy to drag the American people through four more years of a war emptied of all meaning but that of getting out of a trap into which the United States should never have fallen.

When did Kissinger awake to the realities of the war? His friend Professor John G. Stoessinger tells us that it took Kissinger until the fall of 1971, all of three long, bloodstained Nixonian years, to realize that "Hanoi would not compromise." In 1972, Kissinger thought that he could get a Soviet "linkage" to a Vietnam settlement through the grain deal, which gave hundreds of millions of dollars worth of American wheat to Russia at bargain prices at the expense of the American consumer, a price that, Kissinger argued, "was well worth a Vietnam settlement." Again he was disappointed. Finally, on the day that Saigon fell in the spring of 1975, Kissinger told Stoessinger: "Vietnam is a Greek tragedy. We should never have been there at all. But now it's history."[4] As an epitaph on this war, "We should never have been there at all" may never be excelled.

UNLIKE Kissinger, Brzezinski was at first much less circumspect. He was one of the first of the most militant defenders of the prowar faith; he supported the war aggressively in a notable television debate in which his opposite intellectual number was Professor Hans Morgenthau, who was never taken in by the war. Brzezinski's service in behalf of the war helped to get him an appointment in 1966 to the State Department's Policy Planning Council. *Newsweek* hailed him as "one of the fastest-rising stars in the Johnson Administration" and "one of the architects of U.S. foreign policy" after only four months on the job. As for "his hawkish position on Vietnam," the magazine's piece entitled "Diplomacy: The Thinker," went on, "he is apt to act as though he had a monopoly of the truth." The cheering was premature; Brzezinski returned to Columbia University after two years in Washington, apparently sorely disillusioned with the exercise of planning without power.

In this period, Brzezinski had little sympathy with antiwar demonstrators. In an article in *Foreign Affairs* of July 1966, he put

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them down as "a manifestation of a psychological crisis inherent in modern society." Vietnam, he wrote scornfully, was merely "an outlet for basic cravings and fears, and if that issue did not exist, some other one would provide an excuse for the expression of personal and political alienation." This was one way of exonerating the Vietnam war of blame for the widespread popular unrest and widespread opposition to the war.

By 1968, Brzezinski's attitude toward the war showed signs of unbearable strain. On the one hand, he gave up a clear-cut victory in Vietnam; he was now satisfied with denying victory to the enemy, though he never explained how the no-victory-no-defeat for either side was going to be calibrated. On the other hand, he told the *U.S. News & World Report* of February 26, 1968, that he wanted the United States to make it clear that it was willing to continue to fight in Vietnam for 30 years in order to prove to the enemy that "we have the staying power" and "happen to be richer and more powerful." He gave as his reason for such a long-range projection that the United States could not "commit itself to the extent it has, and 'chicken out.'"

By now, there was little or nothing in Vietnam that made 30 years of war advisable or necessary, even to a hitherto fervent supporter of the war; it was the American "commitment" itself that condemned us to an almost unimaginably interminable bloodletting. Thirty years of war was so breathtakingly long that Brzezinski might as well have said "forever." And all this for not even victory. Rereading this interview, one cannot take it seriously. What it suggests is that even as sharp and knowledgeable a specialist in foreign affairs as Brzezinski had completely lost his way and no longer made sense when he talked about the Vietnam war.

By 1969, Brzezinski himself must have realized that he had to find his way back to some kind of sanity about the war. Richard Nixon was now president and vast demonstrations all over the country for a Vietnam "moratorium" had just taken place. In these circumstances, Brzezinski advised Nixon to pledge the removal of American forces from Vietnam "by a particular date (say, two years)." In this statement to the *New York Times* of October 17, 1969, Brzezinski forgot about the 30-years war and neglected to make clear why it was better to "chicken out" in two years rather than immediately.

After this, Brzezinski apparently decided that it was the better part of valor to leave the Vietnam war alone. While the country was in an uproar over it during the first Nixon administration, he turned his attention to other matters—the "technetronic era," Japan and Africa. This intellectual flying-trapeze act took him out of the line of fire and broadened his horizon in preparation for bigger things to come. It was also an admission that the war had become too much for even its most ardent and hardened supporters. It had become intellectually insupportable and even unmentionable.

Brzezinski's advice against "chickening out" and Kissinger's emphasis on ending the war "honorably" were essentially similar in motivation. We were supposed to go on fighting to prove something to ourselves or to the world at large, not to achieve anything of material or political interest in Vietnam. Brzezinski's temporary aberration of fighting on for 30 years was the logical outcome of this line of reasoning. If we could not end the war "honorably" and could not "chicken out," it had to go on and on indefinitely. Brzezinski's bravado was thus the *reductio ad absurdum* of the Vietnam war. Even he seems to have realized it in time.

In the end, Kissinger blamed Watergate and a failure of nerve for the debacle in Vietnam. The American people, Congress, South Vietnam, North Vietnam and the Soviet Union had all conspired to let down Henry Kissinger. The implication that his own people had failed him suggests that Kissinger's understanding of warfare left something to be desired. A good general—and even a good lieutenant—assesses his own strength as objectively as that of the enemy; he does not go into battle without taking into account what his own forces are capable of

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accomplishing and, in the particular case of the American people, what they are willing to fight for and at what cost. It was violation of this cardinal rule of warfare, not failure of nerve, that brought about the dishonorable end of the Vietnam war. It was the very nature of the war—a hopeless war in a land where we should never have been at all—that made its continuation so intolerable and its end so ignominious. There was no good way of getting out of the Vietnam war but the worst way was to pay the price of getting out later rather than sooner.*

In effect, Kissinger and Brzezinski, two celebrated intellectuals who lent their considerable talents to a prolongation of the war, gave up the job of justification when they fell back on ending it "honorably" and not "chickening out." If they could do no better than that, the job was hopeless. Or so it seemed until now.

III

For we have just been offered a book that promises to relieve the American people of a sense of guilt for the Vietnam war and to absolve the United States of *"officially condoned* illegal and immoral conduct." The book is *America in Vietnam*, by Professor Guenter Lewy of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The work comes recommended by Charles B. MacDonald, a military historian, as "a sober, objective answer to polemicists on all sides" that "should enable the Vietnam veteran at last to hold his head high." Has Lewy succeeded where Kissinger and Brzezinski failed?

It should be said at once that those who read this book in order to assuage their guilt over the war are doomed to disappointment. The idea that it will enable a Vietnam veteran to hold his head high is utter rubbish. It does not attempt to answer "polemicists on all sides"; it polemicizes almost exclusively against the antiwar "polemicists." The author, his admirers, and his publishers may have made a mistake in presenting the book as if it were a wholesale apology for the war. This presentation may be enough to arouse curiosity but it does an injustice to the book as a whole.

It is a schizophrenic book. In large part, it made me writhe all over again at the willful stupidity and obdurate delusions with which the war was prosecuted. An almost unrelieved recital of mistakes and misdeeds fills pages and pages of the book. There are two Lewys in this work—one makes an admirable effort to get the facts straight; the other wants to give the United States a clean bill of health or at least the benefit of the doubt. Thus the book lends itself to different conclusions or interpretations depending on what chapter and even what paragraph one chooses to cite. The scholar and the advocate struggle for supremacy; sometimes one wins, sometimes the other.

It would be a mistake, therefore, for critics of the Vietnam war to reject Lewy's work *in toto* because he betrays a special animus against them, sometimes unfairly, or for hard-core supporters of the war to accept it with glee because he seems to favor them from time to time. Much of the book is the result of serious and painstaking research. If I had to draw up a list of a half dozen books worth reading on the war, I would put this one among them, despite its flaws.

But does the author make good his claim that "the sense of guilt created by the Vietnam war in the minds of many Americans is not warranted"? That is what the argument over this book is likely to be about.

The answer partly depends on the answer to another question—guilt about what? There may be justifiable guilt about some things and not about others. Lewy never makes the distinction clear. He himself contributes the most damaging evidence that American

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*Lest the reader think that this is hindsight on my part, I may be permitted to recall that I also attended the Chicago conference on Vietnam of the Adlai Stevenson Institute of Foreign Affairs in June 1968. In view of the coming presidential election, I said: "Do we have a presidential candidate in sight who can say to the American people, 'We have suffered a failure in Vietnam; it is costly to get out; it is more costly to persist.' I fear that unless this is said now and clearly, we will not get out of this morass" (*No More Vietnams? op. cit.*, pp. 97-98).

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officialdom was disastrously guilty of misconceiving and mishandling the war; he also attempts to clear it of some specific varieties of guilt on a most selective basis. Yet his generalizations would make it appear that the United States has no need to feel guilty at all about anything. Here and elsewhere, Lewy undermines his own book by overreaching and overstating.

For example, the American forces in Vietnam deliberately pursued a policy of "the encouragement and creation of refugees." This meant that combat operations, crop destruction, and "specified strike zones" were utilized to drive Vietnamese peasants from their homes in the hundreds of thousands. The most cruel and senseless practice for "generating" refugees or as it was also called euphemistically, "relocating populations," took the form of "free-fire zones." An American commander would simply decide to designate an area, often a huge one, as such a zone so that anyone who remained in it was arbitrarily considered an enemy and thereby subject to annihilating artillery or air bombardment. This policy was pursued on a large scale for at least five years. Only in 1968, after over two years of this practice, were commanders in the field advised that they should not generate refugees "needlessly and heedlessly," with little effect on the actual tactics employed; and only in February 1969 were commanders officially instructed to give at least 72 hours notice to civilians in the areas, as if Vietnamese peasants in far-flung areas were likely to receive and understand such notices or do more than save their disrupted lives if they did.

Lewy knows what was wrong with this horror. He lists seven "inherent weaknesses," including the fact that it was militarily useless and even played into the hands of the enemy. The vast majority of those driven from their homes were old people, women and children; few refugees were males of military age. Even so, the battlefield was not cleared, because refugees persisted in returning to their hamlets. The political madness of the policy comes out in his words: "Not surprisingly, attitude surveys showed a high degree of correlation between forcible evacuation and pro-Communist attitudes." He acknowledges that the crop-destruction program made the local people, not the Vietcong, suffer. He reveals that the American crop-destruction missions were disguised as South Vietnamese activity because the damage obviously could not be limited to the enemy forces to conform with the Army's own manual of land warfare.

Lewy documents more of the same. The fatuous policy of "body counts" encouraged the indiscriminate lumping of combatants and noncombatants, with the result that the killing of villagers could give as much credit as the killing of enemy soldiers, and the only ones really deceived were the Americans themselves. The strategy of attrition was an abject failure. The villagers turned against the United States because American military doctrine called for methods that were insensitive to political and human costs; the South Vietnamese and Korean allies trained in that doctrine behaved even more abominably. American commanders often gave only "token compliance" to orders from above to restrain their excessive use of fire power, so that "the worst features of the traditional mode of operation persisted." Corruption in the South Vietnamese army was so great that it enabled the enemy to purchase supplies in South Vietnamese cities, obtain war materiel and food from South Vietnamese officials and officers, and buy positions as hamlet and village chiefs. The once highly touted South Vietnamese land reform was no more than an "empty gesture." American brigade and division commanders falsified reports to hide their persistent utilization of an unauthorized herbicide agent. Lewy also retells the story of the secret bombing of North Vietnam, based on fictitious enemy-action reports, which brought about the demotion and retirement of General John D. Lavelle, commanding officer of the Seventh Air Force. He has an entire chapter on American "atrocities" in Vietnam, one of which was the My-Lai "massacre," using these very terms—"atrocity" and "massacre." He also describes

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the leniency of court-martials that dealt with these "war crimes"—again in this context his term.

The single American who comes off worst in Lewy's book is no ordinary officer or soldier. He is General William C. Westmoreland, chief of U.S. forces in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968, when he was recalled to become Army Chief of Staff. Lewy seems to hold Westmoreland most responsible for keeping to the disastrous strategy of "the big-unit war of attrition" long after it had been proven futile and self-defeating. In his most scathing indictment of Westmoreland, Lewy goes so far as to doubt that the general could defend himself against the charge that he was guilty of "dereliction of duty," because he should have known that American "violations of the law of war" were bound to take place in the circumstances of Vietnam and should have taken the necessary measures to prevent them.

If one sought to make a devastating condemnation of the Vietnam war, one could do so out of Lewy's book, as I have just done. But such an exercise would reflect only one side of the work. In another, the author seeks almost desperately to muffle his blows on the war and even to lead the unwary reader into believing that he is rushing to its defense.

IV

One way Lewy tries to make a bad war look better is the soft reproach.

For example, President Johnson told reporters after the decision was made to use American troops in Vietnam that he knew of "no far-reaching strategy that is being suggested or promulgated." Lewy's comment is: "Needless to say, Johnson here was being less than candid." Needless to say, Lewy is being less than candid; Johnson knew that a far-reaching strategic change had been initiated and had deliberately misled the reporters and the American people. Or Lewy demonstrates that the so-called Rules of Engagement, ostensibly designed to minimize the destruction of civilian life and property, were extensively and sometimes wantonly disregarded in practice. Lewy's comment is that "this level of familiarity was obviously less than satisfactory." He might have said more satisfactorily that the level of familiarity was grossly unsatisfactory and even culpably negligent.

Sometimes Lewy likes to have it both ways. He raises the question whether South Vietnam could have survived if U.S. aid had not been cut off in 1975. His first answer tends to be highly pessimistic—"there is reason to believe that, everything else being equal, internal weaknesses on the part of the South Vietnamese armed forces alone might have been sufficient to cause defeat in 1975." A few pages later, however, he seems to backtrack. The odds were still against the South Vietnamese but their defeat was not a "foregone conclusion." If President Nixon had been able to dissociate himself from the Watergate burglars and had been able to reintroduce American military power in Vietnam as he had promised; if Congress had been persuaded to provide South Vietnam with adequate military supplies; if the OPEC nations had suffered an early breakup and oil had continued to be cheap; if the North Vietnamese had made a few major mistakes; if South Vietnamese nationalists and anti-Communist sects had been able to overthrow the Thieu regime. . . . After this long string of "ifs," Lewy concludes: "None of these events was impossible, and if their occurrence in combination was unlikely, this was no more so than the combination of opposite events which did in fact take place." In this way, Lewy cuts the ground from under his own work. He has spent most of his book making quite credible the combination of events that in fact took place, with particular emphasis on the internal weaknesses of the South Vietnamese armed forces. Then he turns around, belies his own work, and makes the historical record no more likely to have happened than the conveniently early breakup of OPEC. This is not the only instance where he seems to flinch from the implications of his own findings.

What, above all, gives Lewy the air of being

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a defender of the prowar faith is his criticism of the Vietnam war's critics. He always refers to them with a particularly wrathful peevishness. Sometimes, his tantrum gets in the way of elementary fairness.

I will offer myself as a case in point.

My book *Abuse of Power* was published in 1967. It was based on work done in the previous year and a half or so. Since Lewy's book has come out in 1978, 11 years later, it would be odd if he had not consulted material not available to me or to other critics a decade ago. In any case, Lewy decided to teach me a lesson about a major turning point in the war—President Johnson's decision in February 1965 to initiate large-scale bombing of North Vietnam.

To justify this momentous step, the State Department issued later that month a White Paper entitled *Aggression from the North: The Record of North Viet-Nam's Campaign to Conquer South Viet-Nam.* The thesis of the White Paper was—North Vietnamese forces had invaded South Vietnam in such numbers that the previously officially regarded civil war had turned into a foreign "aggression." The question naturally arose whether the incursion of North Vietnamese forces was large enough to justify the massive intervention of American ground forces. The White Paper was a propaganda flop because it failed to sustain the claim of a large-scale invasion from the North. Lewy admits the "weakness" of the White Paper. But then he goes on:

> Theodore Draper alleges that at the time the bombing of North Vietnam started, Hanoi had only 400 regular soldiers in the South. The U.S. converted this into an "invasion" in order to have a justification for its own escalation.[122]

The footnote goes even further and changes the "allegation" into a "canard." An allegation implies a statement without supporting evidence; a canard means an unfounded and especially a false report. Could my treatment of the issue fairly be described as either a mere allegation or an outright canard?

I devoted almost eight pages to the question of the North Vietnamese infiltration southward. I related that Secretary of State Rusk had claimed that the entire 325th Division had been moved into South Vietnam by January 1965. But I noted that the White Paper the following month had not even mentioned the 325th, as it might have been expected to do. I also pointed out that Secretary of Defense McNamara, who should have known best, had in April 1965 confirmed the presence of only one battalion, estimated by him at 400 to 500 men, of the 325th in the south. Over a year later, in June 1966, Senator Mike Mansfield, the Democratic majority leader, had publicly repeated the number of "only about 400 North Vietnamese soldiers" in the South at the time of "the sharp increase in the American military effort" in early 1965. An enquiring reporter had subsequently learned that Senator Mansfield had obtained his figure from the Pentagon. Other evidence pointed in the same direction.

After laying out all the available information, I commented:

> Clearly we cannot be sure whether a battalion or a regiment or all of the 325th Division crossed into South Vietnam by January 1965 or at any other time. We could not be sure even if Secretaries Rusk and McNamara agreed, and their disagreement adds a dash of farce to what was otherwise one of the most grievous moments of the war. The most we can conclude from the available evidence is that it was extraordinarily necessary for the Secretary of State to have an "invasion" of South Vietnam by a North Vietnamese organized unit at least as large as a division before the United States began its systematic bombing of the North in February 1965.

Thus I did not even foreclose the question of the number of North Vietnamese regular soldiers in the South in February 1965. I rather emphasized the official disparities, which at that time would have led any fair-minded observer not to know what to believe. My final word was: "We may still not know much about the elusive 325th, but we can know a great deal about how it was bandied to and fro by high American officials who could not even convince each other." Nor did I say that the United States had converted the smaller number of North Vietnamese regulars

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into an "invasion"; I said that Secretary Rusk, the only one who then vouched for the presence of an entire North Vietnamese division in the South, had shown an extraordinary need for at least a division to justify the U.S. bombing campaign in the North. My very point was that leading officials of the United States were divided in their pronouncements on the subject.

Can my treatment be fairly described as an "allegation," as if I had picked out a number without reason, or as a "canard," as if I had spread a demonstrably false, unfounded rumor? The real authors of the report about the 400 North Vietnamese regular soldiers in the South were Secretary McNamara and Senator Mansfield, no inconsequential authorities on such a matter, and their information had clearly come from the Pentagon. The most that could be said at the time was that Secretary Rusk and the State Department claimed to know better.

LEWY, HOWEVER, has triumphantly brought forth a new source of intelligence on what I called "the elusive 325th." It comes from a "Working Paper of the U.S. State Department on the North Vietnamese Role in the War in South Vietnam," issued in May 1968. According to this "working paper," which did not appear in print in the United States until 1969, 4,000 North Vietnamese regulars went south by February 1965 and another 1,800 by March 1965.[5] If the ultimate source was South Vietnamese, Lewy himself, in other connections, tells us how unreliable this source was; and if the data was provided two or three years after the event, it would be even more suspect.

Lewy's use of this "working paper" is so uncritical that it betrays his anxiety to defend the U.S. bombing at all costs.

- First, it appeared in 1968, almost three and a half years after the event and a year after I had shown what unholy confusion had attended the whole matter. Obviously, I could not have known of a 1968 "working paper" in 1967. Neither could Secretary Rusk have based himself on it in 1965.
- Second, the 1968 paper originated in the Department of State, not in the Department of Defense. There was nothing new about the State Department claims. I had already made known similar claims by Secretary of State Rusk in 1965. The problem arose because Secretary Rusk was controverted by Secretary of Defense McNamara and Senator Mansfield. A fair treatment would not have taken something put out by the State Department years later and subsequently generally ignored as if it were the last word on the subject; the discrepancy between the State Department and the Pentagon was the real question worth looking into, but Lewy chooses to ignore it.
- Third, the reason I was struck by the remarkably dissimilar versions of North Vietnamese infiltration by February 1965 was the inordinate importance attached to it as the justification for America's massive intervention. Whatever was the number of North Vietnamese regular troops in the South in 1965, the U.S. combat force in South Vietnam was already far greater. The U.S. force increased from 23,000 at the end of 1964 to about 125,000 in the summer of 1965. Even if the 1968 "working paper" is taken at face value, the number of North Vietnamese troops in the South increased from 2,000 at the end of 1964 to 7,000 by September 1965. The "working paper" itself alluded to the "relatively slow pace of the [North Vietnamese] buildup" in all of 1965. It was already clear to me in 1967 that the American decision to intervene on a large scale was based "on South Vietnamese weakness rather than North Vietnamese strength." After all his pious protests against my "allegation" and "canard," Lewy ends by agreeing with me on this point. Somehow, a mere "allegation" and an outright "canard" had enabled me to reach the right conclusion.

I have gone into this example of Lewy's polemics against the "polemicists" because it shows how lacking in sobriety and objectivity he can be. It was necessary to go into it in some detail because the present reader could not be expected to have Lewy's book and mine at hand to refresh his memory regarding the background and significance of the

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question at issue. In effect, Lewy's book sometimes suffers from an excess of zeal, especially in his frequently intemperate dismissal of premature critics of the Vietnam war.

V

The heart of the matter is the peculiar strategy that Lewy employs to relieve Americans of a sense of guilt created by the Vietnam war and to dismiss from their consciences "charges of *officially condoned* illegal and grossly immoral conduct." He convinced me that this form of apologia is as doomed as the American war effort in Vietnam.

It is important to be clear about what Lewy defends. He does not defend the American way of war in Vietnam. He condemns its "obtuseness and mistakes in judgment." All that he affirms is that these were not the result of "culpable negligence." If the negligence was not "culpable," no war crimes were committed. He is operating here on a very narrow defensive front. The only sense of guilt he seeks to relieve is that for very legally circumscribed, intentional "war crimes."

The word "intentionally" plays a crucial role in his brief for the defense. He is willing to admit that "the rather free use of napalm and attacks upon fortified hamlets with artillery and air strikes can be criticized on humanitarian grounds"—to put it mildly in view of his own account of the ruthless, senseless devastation wrought by the "free-fire zones." Yet he can still find it "morally significant" that the tactics employed "did not intentionally aim at inflicting casualties upon the civilian population." Nevertheless, he had previously shown that, year after year, almost all the casualties brought about by these tactics were inflicted on the civilian population. He had previously shown that these casualties had been remorselessly inflicted on the civilian population because Vietnamese civilians and enemy soldiers or agents had been stupidly, arbitrarily, and indiscriminately lumped together. What in these circumstances is the meaning of "not intentionally"? What makes it so remarkably different for our sense of guilt from "intentionally"?

On one page, Lewy's apologia reveals its essential hollowness and heartlessness. His conclusion to a chapter on "American Military Tactics and the Law of War" begins with a general absolution:

> The American record in Vietnam with regard to observance of the law of war is not a succession of war crimes and does not support charges of a systematic and willful violation of existing agreements for standards of human decency in time of war, as many critics of the American involvement have alleged.

But the first sentence of the very next paragraph goes this way:

> If the American record is not one of gross illegality, neither has it been a model of observance of the law of war.

Here we have Lewy trying to have it both ways again. The second time around he merely absolves us of "gross illegality." How gross is "gross"? We can now see why Lewy italicized two words in his formulation of unwarranted charges of "*officially condoned* illegal and grossly immoral conduct." The conduct may be illegal but it is not all that bad unless it is *officially condoned*; it may be immoral but not anything to feel guilty about unless it is *grossly* immoral. How far up in the military hierarchy did illegal conduct have to go in order to be officially condoned? The "free-fire zone" horror was not merely officially condoned; it was officially conceived and carried out at the very top. It was persisted in by the American military command despite what Lewy calls its lamentable "cost-benefit equation." Lewy's tricky formulas do not white-wash illegal or immoral conduct; they defend it only from the most extreme accusations of such conduct.

In fact, Lewy betrays a guilty conscience of his own. In the very last paragraph of the same chapter, he draws back from making his entire case depend on the "law of war":

> In the final analysis, of course, law alone, no matter how comprehensive and carefully phrased, cannot assure protection of basic human values. Back in the seventeenth century,

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Hugo Grotius, the father of modern international law, quoted with approval the advice which Euripides in *The Trojan Women* put into the mouth of Agamemnon addressing Pyrrhus: "What the law does not forbid, then let shame forbid." This counsel retains its moral worth. While the law of war is an extremely important means of mitigating the ravages of war, it cannot be considered an adequate and sufficient measure of human decency.

The implication is clear: Americans who read *Americans in Vietnam* should not feel guilty; they should feel ashamed. This substitution of terms is really the core of Lewy's case; it may make some readers feel better. It is a continuing shame, however, that the shamefulness of this war should be incidentally mentioned in a book designed to cover up the shame by taking refuge in narrow and dubious legalisms. I said at the outset that this was a schizophrenic book; it is never more schizophrenic than in a chapter that starts by seeking to acquit us of violating the "law of war" and ends by implicitly condemning us to shame.

I have thought it necessary to deal at some length with *America in Vietnam* because it is the most ambitious effort to decontaminate the American role in Vietnam. It is a vain, self-defeating effort. It will serve a useful purpose only if it makes us more acutely aware how stupid, miserable, and costly that war was.

VI

The main reason for the predicament of Kissinger and Brzezinski in the past and Lewy in the present is that they had difficulty fitting the Vietnam war into a larger framework. The war was never worth fighting for Vietnam alone; it always had to be made subsidiary to a larger purpose. The trouble was that it did not quite fit any of those imposed on it.

Kissinger's reason for going on with the war made the entire American position in world affairs and even world peace depend on an "honorable" ending. "What is involved now is confidence in American promises," he wrote in 1968, and "ending the war honorably is essential for the peace of the world." In the end, an "honorable" settlement came to mean the preservation of the South Vietnam regime or the frustration of a North Vietnamese victory, which amounted to the same thing. Thus the survival of a regime that almost all Americans in positions of authority regarded as hopelessly corrupt and hopelessly weak was endowed with a value and importance out of all proportion to what it could bear. The tangibles of national strength and stability were sacrificed to intangibles such as American "prestige" and "honor." Estimable as the latter may be, they were not worth the price that had to be paid for them in real assets. Even worse, honor went when power failed.

Kissinger's rationale for continuing the war betrayed a basic misunderstanding of both the world and the American people. It was darkly said that America's allies in Europe would lose all faith in American commitments if the United States let down South Vietnam. In fact, America's allies were increasingly alarmed at the frittering away of American resources in Vietnam and the social turmoil in the United States that threatened to escalate out of control. Ominous fears were also expressed as to what the American people might do if and when they woke up to the reality of a lost war, as if Nixonian America were Weimar Germany. When the war ended as badly as a war could possibly end, at least for the South Vietnamese, the popular American reaction was one of relief and fatigue. If it had been otherwise, former President Nixon would have been driven out for the sins of Vietnam instead of for the crimes of Watergate. The American people were not interested in an "honorable" end, whatever that might have been; they were interested in the end.

In his fighting-on-for-30-years period, Brzezinski made a similar miscalculation. He thought it was necessary to prove to the enemy "that we have the staying power" and "happen to be richer and more powerful." It was wrong for the United States to "chicken out," he said, because "the consequences of getting out would be far more costly than the expense of staying in." By 1968, when this rationalization was made, it was already

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abundantly clear that the riches and power that we had were not the right kind for a war in Vietnam and that we would be much less rich and far less powerful the longer we stayed. It was ludicrously wrong to have made the consequences of getting out far worse than the expense of staying in. These terrible consequences were supposed to have beset the United States in the world at large, not in Vietnam, and all the world did when we got out was to heave a sigh of relief.

Ten years later, Lewy knows better than to bewail our loss of "honor" or "prestige." His problem is to explain the American failure in Vietnam, not to prevent it. He hints at an explanation without reflecting on what its implications might be.

Lewy twice uses the same phrase—that the United States and its allies in Vietnam failed "to understand the real stakes in a revolutionary war." He never explains what he understands by an American "revolutionary war" in Vietnam or how we could possibly have waged it. But the suggestion is dropped, and it is worth considering.

To have waged a revolutionary war in Vietnam, we would have needed a revolutionary South Vietnamese regime. Lewy has no illusions about the corruption and unpopularity of the Thieu regime. He even quotes a statement, with which he says many agreed, that "if Thieu wants to eliminate corruption in the army he must fire himself." Lewy also recognizes: "The war not only had to be won in South Vietnam, but it had to be won by the South Vietnamese." In effect, the United States could not have made it a revolutionary war even if it had wanted to do so. The politics of this war, which was decisive, was essentially decided by the Vietnamese themselves. The dilemma that this situation presented was: the war could not be won if it was not revolutionary, and it could not be revolutionary if it was up to the South Vietnamese.

Lewy also makes clear why the American armed forces were incapable of fighting a revolutionary war in Vietnam. He reports "the growing disdain for the Vietnamese people among U.S. military personnel in Vietnam." So many American soldiers were killed or wounded by mines and booby traps in or near hamlets that "it became the prudent thing to doubt the loyalty of every villager." The result was: "Some soldiers began to adopt the so-called mere-gook rule, the attitude that the killing of Vietnamese, regardless of sex, age, or combatant status, was of little importance for they were, after all, only gooks." Elsewhere, Lewy changes "some" to "many" soldiers who lived by this "rule," which helps to explain the high civilian casualties, civilian inclusion in the inflated body counts, and the deliberate "generation" of a vast horde of refugees. A survey of marines in 1966 in one province revealed that 40 percent disliked the Vietnamese; small-unit leaders ranked highest in their "negative attitudes." Fewer than 20 percent of noncommissioned officers had "a positive attitude" toward the South Vietnamese armed forces.

A "revolutionary war," then, was and is a political pipe dream. The Vietnam war could not be put into a revolutionary any more than it could comfortably be put into a larger international framework. When Kissinger at long last saw the light and told his friend Professor Stoessinger that "we should never have been there at all," he was saying only part of the depressing truth. The rest that needed to be said was that we should have decided to get out of the war as soon as possible, to cut our losses as soon as possible, to stop killing Vietnamese and Americans and wasting our national substance as soon as possible.

Of course, if the Carters and Vances and Kissingers and Brzezinskis had said all this prematurely, that is, when it needed to be said, they might not be where they are today. All they might have is the dismal satisfaction of knowing that they were right. □

Notes

[1]In his *Kissinger: Portrait of a Mind* (New York: Norton, 1973), Stephen R. Graubard claimed that Kissinger "had nothing to say" because he still "did not know enough about the issues" until 1968 (pp. 279-80). Graubard gives no evidence of knowing about Kissinger's article in *Look*—it is not listed in his bibliography—in which Kissinger had quite a lot to say before 1968. And if two

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anything-and-anyone-you-want-to-see-and-hear personal tours of Vietnam, lasting altogether a month, and top-level briefings in the Pentagon, let alone mere reading of the newspapers, were not enough to give one something to say about Vietnam, very few Americans would have felt obliged to summon up the moral courage to take a stand against the war. John G. Stoessinger in his *Henry Kissinger: The Anguish of Power* (Norton, 1976) gave two different reasons—that Kissinger did not speak up until 1968 because he was interested "in a global conceptual approach" and because he was looking for an opportunity to test it in action (p. 43). Stoessinger also seems to have been ignorant of the *Look* article, which would have spoiled his time scheme, and which, in essence, already contained the Kissingerian conceptual approach, albeit not with its "global" trappings.

[2]*No More Vietnams?* Richard M. Pfeffer, ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 11-13.

[3]The article on "The Vietnam Negotiations" in *Foreign Affairs* of January 1969, written in the late summer and early autumn of 1968, was reprinted in *American Foreign Policy* (Norton, 1969). The idea of the "subtle triangle" appeared in one of Rockefeller's speeches (Graubard, *op. cit.*, p. 252).

[4]Stoessinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 60, 65, 76-77.

[5]Lewy says that only a part of the "working paper" was published in *Viet-Nam Documents and Research Notes*, issued by the U.S. Embassy in Saigon in June 1968. It appeared in its entirety in the United States as an appendix to *The Vietnam War and International Law*, Richard A. Falk, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), Vol. II, pp. 1183-1206. All the paper gives is the number of prisoners and captured documents on which the data is based, but not their provenance or anything else about them. The paper is said to be based on a "compilation" of material, which, however, is not given. One cannot tell from the paper itself how "carefully researched and documented" it is, despite Lewy's touching assurance. □

CHICAGO

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Octavio Paz

The Philanthropic Ogre

In this essay the distinguished Mexican writer Octavio Paz reflects on some of the problems of his country—problems that to one or another extent seem characteristic of those countries that cannot quite be called either "underdeveloped" or "advanced." The essay is reprinted, with permission, from the Mexican journal Vuelta.—EDS.

Just look
How big I am! Jove up there in the sky
. . . he can't be any bigger.

— OVID, *Metaphorphoses*, 13, lines 839-42

Mexico, 1978

Liberals used to think that "civil society" would flourish thanks to the development of free enterprise, and the function of the state would correspondingly be reduced until it was merely supervising humanity's spontaneous evolution. Marxists more optimistically thought the century that saw the rise of socialism would also see the withering-away of the state.

These hopes and prophecies have evaporated. The 20th-century state has proved itself a force more powerful than the ancient empires and a master more terrible than the old tyrants and despots: a faceless, inhuman master who functions not like a demon but like a machine. Theologians and moralists had conceived of evil as an exception and a transgression, a blot on the universality and transparency of Being. Except for Manichaean tendencies, in the philosophic tradition of the West evil lacked substance and could be defined only as an absence, that is to say, a lack of Being. Strictly speaking, evil did not exist, only evil men, exceptions, special cases. The 20th-century state inverts the proposition: evil ultimately conquers universality and presents itself wearing the mask of Being. Except that, as evil grows larger, evil-doers grow proportionally smaller. They are no longer exceptional beings, only mirrors of normalcy. A Hitler or a Stalin, a Himmler or a Yezhov astonish us by their mediocrity as well as by their crimes. Their intellectual insignificance confirms Hannah Arendt's verdict on "the banality of evil."

The modern state is a machine—a continually self-reproducing machine. Far from being the mere political superstructure of the capitalist system in the West, it is the model for economic organizations; large enterprises and businesses imitate it and tend to turn into states and empires more powerful than many nations. In the last 50 years we have witnessed not the expected socialization of capitalism but its gradual, irresistible bureaucratization. The great multinational companies already hint at a bureaucratic capitalism. Their counterparts are the totalitarian bureaucracies of Eastern Europe. There the process has been more rapid and more ruthless. "Civil society" has almost completely disappeared: nothing

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and no one exists outside the state. It is a surprising inversion of values that would have made Nietzsche himself shudder: the state is Being and exception; irregularity and even simple individualism are forms of evil, that is, of nothingness. The concentration camp, which reduces the prisoner to a nonperson, is the political expression of the ontology implicit in the totalitarian ideocracies.

Despite the all-pervading presence and omnipotence of the 20th-century state—and despite the example of the anarchist tradition, so rich in divinations and prophetic descriptions—criticism of power and of the state was reborn only a short while ago. I am thinking especially of France, Germany, and the United States. In Latin America, there is much less interest in the state. Here our scholars are still obsessed by the themes of dependence and underdevelopment. It is true that our situation is different. Latin-American societies are highly peculiar: the Counterreformation and liberalism exist side by side as do the landed estates and industry, the illiterate and the cosmopolitan man of letters, the political boss and the banker. But the oddity of our societies should not prevent us from studying the Latin-American state, which is actually one of our greatest peculiarities. On the one hand, it is heir to the patrimonial regime of Spain; on the other, it is the lever to get modernization underway. Its nature is ambiguous, contradictory, and in a certain way fascinating. The following pages, dealing with the case best known to me—Mexico—are the result of such fascination. I need hardly warn readers that my opinions are a series of reflections, not a consistent theory.

First and foremost, the state created by the Mexican revolution is stronger than the 19th-century state. In this, as in so many other things, the revolutionaries have not only shown decidedly traditionalist leanings but have been unfaithful to the liberals of 1857 whom they claim as their predecessors. Except during the interregnums of anarchy and civil war, we Mexicans have lived in the shadow of governments that have been despotic or paternalistic in turn, but have always been strong: the Aztec priest-king, the viceroy, the dictator, Mr. President. The exception is the brief period that Cosío Villegas calls the Restored Republic, during which the liberals tried to blunt the claws of the state we inherited from New Spain. Those claws were (and still are) called bureaucracy and army. The liberals wanted a strong society and a weak state—an exemplary attempt that soon failed: Porfirio Díaz [who was president in 1877 and again in 1884-1911] inverted the proposition and fashioned Mexico into a weak society dominated by a strong state.

The liberals thought that modernization would be carried out by the bourgeoisie and the middle class, as it had been in other parts of the world—in England, France, the United States. This did not happen, and with Díaz the state began to turn into the agent of modernization. It is true that his regime based its economic policies on private enterprise and foreign capital. But the founding of industrial enterprises and the construction of factories and railroads was less the expression of the dynamism of a bourgeois class than the result of a deliberate government policy of stimuli and incentives. Moreover, what decided the issue was not economic policy but the goal to strengthen the state. In order for an organism to be able to complete such historic tasks as the modernization of a country, the first prerequisite is that it be strong. Under Porfirio Díaz the Mexican state recovered the power it had lost during the conflicts and wars that followed Independence.

The conservative historian Carlos Pereyra points out that the political convulsions and the chaotic state of the country right up to Díaz's dictatorship essentially resulted from the weakness of governments from Independence, in 1821, onward. The colonial state of New Spain had been a construction of extraordinary solidity, capable of withstan-

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ding both rebellious landowners and despotic bishops. When it collapsed, it left behind a rich class that was extremely powerful and divided into irreconcilable factions. The absence of a central moderating power, combined with the nonexistence of democratic traditions, explains why opposing factions quickly took to arms in order to settle their differences. And so the plague of militarism was born: the sword was a response to the weakness of the state and the power of the factions.

Why was the Mexican state weak? It was weak, says Pereyra, because it was poor. I must clarify: it was not the country but the body politic that was poor. The state was poor, compared with a church that owned half the country and a propertied and landowning class that was immensely wealthy. How could the bishops be subjugated, and how could law be made to prevail in a society where each family head considered himself a monarch? Under General Díaz's dictatorship the Mexican state began to emerge from poverty. The governments that followed Díaz, once the violent stage of the Revolution was over, went on getting richer, and soon, with Calles, another general [president 1924-28, and the power behind the presidency 1928-36], the Mexican government embarked on a career as great entrepreneur. Today it is the most powerful capitalist in the country though, as we all know, neither the most efficient nor the most honest.

The revolutionary state did more than grow and get rich. Like Japan during the Meiji period, it made use of appropriate legislation and a policy of privileges, stimuli, and credits to further and protect the development of the capitalist class. Mexican capitalism was born long before the Revolution, but it came to maturity and grew to what it is now thanks to the actions and protection of revolutionary governments. At the same time, the state stimulated and favored industrial and rural workers' organizations. These groups lived and still live in its shadow, since they form part of the PRI.*

Yet, it would be wrong and simplistic to reduce our image of their relationship with public power to that of subject and ruler. This relationship is considerably more complex: for one thing, in a one-party regime like Mexico's, the popular organizations are the almost exclusive source of legitimization of the state's power; for another, the popular unions, especially the workers' unions, have a certain freedom of movement. The government needs the unions as much as the unions need the government. In practice, the only two forces capable of negotiating with the government are the capitalists and the leaders of the workforce. Finally, not content with stimulating and, to a certain extent, creating both the capitalist and the working-class sectors in its own image, the postrevolutionary state ended its evolution by creating two parallel bureaucracies. The first is made up of administrators and technocrats; these people are government personnel and legitimate successors of the bureaucracies of the colony and the "Porfirist" period. They are the mind and arm of modernization. The second is composed of political professionals who run the various levels and divisions of the PRI. These two bureaucracies live in a continuous osmosis, everlastingly moving from the party to the government and vice versa.

The description is hasty and schematic but not inexact. It shows that the central power in Mexico lies not in private capitalism nor in the syndicated unions nor in political parties, but in the state. The State is Capital, Work, and Party—a secular Trinity. However, it is not a totalitarian state nor a dictatorship. In the Soviet Union the state owns things and men; I mean, it owns the means of production, products, and producers. In its turn the state is owned by the Communist party and the party is owned by the Central Committee.

*Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary party), which has been in power under different names, since 1929.

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In Mexico, the state belongs to the double bureaucracy: the administrative technocracy and the political caste. And yet, these bureaucracies are not autonomous, and they live in a constant relationship—rivalry, complicity, alliances, and ruptures—with the other two groups who dominate the country along with them: private capitalism and the working-class bureaucracies. Furthermore, these latter are not homogeneous either; they are divided by conflicts of interests, ideas, and personalities.

Now, indeed, another sector is becoming more and more influential and independent: the middle class and its spokesmen, students and intellectuals. The function of the friars and clerics of New Spain now is fulfilled by university communities and writers. Ideology today occupies the place that once belonged to theology and religion. Luckily, Mexico is an increasingly diverse society, and the practice of criticism—the only antidote for ideological orthodoxies—is growing in proportion to the diversification of the country.

The interaction of all these classes, groups, and individuals takes place within a framework—the international arena. Some countries indirectly influence public opinion by means of different groups—especially students, journalists, and other professional sectors. As in the case of Cuba, this influence sometimes has little relation to the country's actual power and progress on the economic, social, or cultural fronts. Naturally, the most substantial reality is the multiple power of the United States: a power that is economic, social, technical, scientific, and military, all at one and the same time. The might of the United States becomes a fascination—that is, it inspires a contradictory feeling of attraction and revulsion. Its influence is especially profound, and frequently ominous, in the economic sphere; it also penetrates the realms of technology, science, culture, popular sensibility, and, of course, politics.

The presence of the United States in Mexican life is a historical fact that needs no demonstration; it has a physical, material reality. My earlier observation about the ambiguous relationship between the unions and the Mexican state can be applied to a certain extent to the one that unites us with Washington. I mean, it is a relationship of domination that cannot be reduced purely and simply to the concept of dependence; it is a relationship that allows a certain freedom of negotiation and movement. There is a margin for action. Narrow though this margin may seem to us, it is at any rate considerably wider than that which separates Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, or Cuba from the Soviet Union. Of course, in moments of political crisis the influence of the American ambassador to Mexico can be—and indeed has been—as important and decisive as that of the satrap of the Great King during the Peloponnesian war.

The radical authors—Plekhanov, Lenin, Trotsky—who at the turn of the century concerned themselves with the social history of prerevolutionary Russia were at one in pointing out the weakness of the bourgeoisie when faced with the authoritarian state. One of the characteristics of Russian capitalism was its dependence on the Czarist state. The bourgeoisie never succeeded in freeing itself totally from the tutelage of the autocracy. This failing ultimately prevented it from completing the task that, according to the Marxists, was its historic mission: the modernization of Russia. All the polemics between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks stem from the different positions that these groups adopted to deal with this situation.

Beside the weakness of the bourgeoisie, another often neglected factor must be mentioned: the Czarist state could not be an efficient agent of modernization because, in its structure, its leaders, and its animating spirit, it was still to a large extent a "patrimonialist" state, to use the term coined by Max Weber. In short, there is no doubt that the weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie, when confronted with the patrimonialist state, was the determining cause of the

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Revolution's final outcome. The Soviet bureaucracy, which succeeded the autocracy, took upon itself the task of modernization that, historically, according to Marxist opinion, belonged to the bourgeoisie; but the results were as contrary to the forecasts of the Mensheviks as to those of the Bolsheviks. The conjunction of political power and economic power—both of them absolute—produced neither the bourgeois democratic revolution nor socialism, but the implantation of a totalitarian ideocracy.

I have used the example of Russia, although it seems far-fetched, because this sheds light, indirectly, on the peculiarities of the Mexican situation. In Mexico as in Russia at the turn of the century, the historic goals of the intellectuals and also those of many prominent groups and the enlightened bourgeoisie can be epitomized in the word "modernization" (industrial development, democracy, technology, laicity, etc.). In Mexico as in Russia, when faced with the relative weakness of its own bourgeoisie, the central agent of modernization has been the state. Finally, as in Russia, our state inherited a patrimonial regime—that of the viceroys of New Spain.

Yet, there are two basic differences. First, the brief but ineradicable democratic period of the Restored Republic (1867-76), which interposed itself between the state of New Spain and the modern state. Second, while the totalitarian state wiped out the Russian bourgeoisie, subdued the peasants and the workers, exterminated its political rivals, murdered its critics, and created a new ruling class, the Mexican state has shared its power not only with the nation's bourgeoisie but also with the cadres who control the great unions. As I have pointed out, the relationship between the various Mexican governments, the leaders of Mexico's workers and peasants, and the bourgeoisie is ambiguous, a sort of unstable alliance that is not without quarrels, especially between the private and public sectors. All this can be summed up in one basic difference that contains all others and is paramount: whereas in Russia the party is the true state, in Mexico the state is the substantial element, and the party is its arm and instrument. And so, although Mexico is not really a democracy, it is not a totalitarian ideocracy either.

I still must mention another noteworthy characteristic of the Mexican state. Despite having been the prime agent of modernization, it has not succeeded in becoming entirely modernized itself. In many aspects, especially in its dealings with the public and its manner of conducting business, it continues to be patrimonialist. In a regime of this sort the head of government—be it prince or president—considers the state his personal patrimony. For this reason, far from constituting an impersonal bureaucracy, the body of civil servants and government employees—from the ministers to the page boys and from the magistrates and senators to the janitors—forms a huge political family bound by ties of kinship, friendship, personal obligation, similar backgrounds, and other such matters.

Patrimonialism, in essence, is the incrustation of private upon public life. The ministers are the intimates and servants of the king. Therefore, although all courtiers are cut from the same cloth, patrimonialist regimes do not rigidify into orthodoxies nor turn into bureaucracies. They are the opposite of a church, and for this reason the bonds between courtiers are not ideological but personal, quite unlike the bonds formed in such bodies as the Catholic church and the Communist party. In political and ecclesiastic bureaucracies, the hierarchy is sacred and governed by such objective rules and immutable principles as initiation, novitiate or apprenticeship, length of service, competence, diligence, and obedience to superiors. What counts ultimately in a patrimonial regime is the will of the prince and his relatives.

Within the Mexican state, there exists an enormous contradiction that no one has been able or even tried to resolve: the body of technocrats and administrators, the professional bureaucracy, shares the privileges and risks of

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public administration with the friends, intimates, and favorites of the current president, and with the friends, intimates, and favorites of his ministers. The Mexican bureaucracy is modern, is proposing to modernize the country, and has a modern set of values. Side by side with it, sometimes as its rival and sometimes as its associate, stands a mass of friends, relations, and protégés united by bonds of a personal nature. This courtly society is partially renewed every six years—that is, each time a new president comes to power. By virtue of their situation as well as their implicit ideology and method of recruitment, these bodies of courtiers are not modern; they are a remnant of patrimonialism. The contradiction between the courtly society and the technocratic bureaucracy does not immobilize the state, but it does make its progress difficult and tortuous. The state does not have two kinds of politics; it has two ways of understanding politics, two kinds of sensibility and morals.

In England as in France, the modern regimes struggled from the start to endow the new bourgeois state with an ad hoc bureaucracy, radically different from that of the 17th- and 18th-century monarchies. Or, rather, as Norbert Elias has admirably demonstrated, the 19th- and 20th-century bureaucracies in the West were formed within the Third Estate, in permanent conflict with the courtly society of the absolutist regimes.

By its origin, work patterns, hierarchies, and morals the new bureaucracy was the negation of patrimonialism. Its evolution was the same as that of the bourgeoisie, which moved from a world of privilege to one of economics and from judicial logic to the logic of private enterprise. So it imposed economic rationalism, which is essentially quantitative regarding the discharge of state business. An impossible requirement: the state is not an enterprise. The gains and losses of a nation are calculated differently from what the rules of accounting teach us. This is a contradiction that the liberal bourgeois state has been unable to resolve.

From the perspective of the administration of things, the bureaucracies of the democratic bourgeois societies have been incomparably superior not only to those of the old monarchies but also to those of the totalitarian states of our day. I might add that they have been more humane and more tolerant as well as more efficient. But this superiority in the professional and moral spheres becomes inferiority when we turn from administration to politics. This inferiority is obvious in the realm of international relations.

Examples of the political ineptitude of the bourgeois democracies abound. Their attitude toward Hitler was an extraordinary mixture of inconsistency and blindness. At first, their intransigence and selfishness toward Germany favored the rise of Nazism; later, sometimes calculatingly and sometimes through cowardice, they became the dictator's accomplices. Their politics vis-à-vis Stalin were no more clear-sighted. The same mixture of treacherous and short-term realism informs their attitude to the satraps and tyrants of the New and Old Worlds. Opportunism does not entirely explain these failings and incoherencies.

The fault is congenital, and I have indicated the reason above: the state is neither a factory nor a business. The logic of history is not quantitative. Economic rationality depends on the relationship between expenditure and production, investment and earnings, work and savings. The rationale of the state is not utility nor profit but power—gaining it, conserving it, and extending it. The archetype of power does not lie in economics but in war, not in the polemical relationship of capital to work but in the hierarchical relationship of commander to soldier. This is why the model of political and religious bureaucracies is a military one, the Society of Jesus, the Communist party.

The peculiar nature of the Mexican state is shown by the presence of three different orders or formations (different, but in continuous communication and osmosis):

1. The government bureaucracy proper, more or less stable, made up of technicians

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and administrators, created in the image and likeness of the bureaucracies of the democratic societies of the West.

2. The heterogeneous conglomeration of friends, favorites, intimates, minions and protégés, the legacy of the courtly society of the 17th and 18th centuries.

3. The political bureaucracy of the PRI, made up of political professionals, less an ideological association than one of factional and individual interests, a broad channel for social mobility and a great fraternity open to ambitious young men, usually without means and recently graduated from the colleges and universities. The bureaucracy of the PRI is halfway between the traditional political party and the bureaucracies that operate in the name of an orthodoxy and as militias of God or History. The PRI uses no terrorist tactics; it does not want to change men or save the world; it wants to save itself. Therefore it wants to be reformed. But it knows that to reform itself it must reform the country. The question that history has posed in Mexico since 1968 not only consists in whether the state will be able to rule without the PRI but also in whether we Mexicans will let ourselves be ruled without a PRI.

The theme of Political Reform, as the Mexican government's recent attempts to introduce pluralism are called, merits a short digression. The PRI was born of necessity: it had to assure the continuity of the post-revolutionary regime, threatened by quarrels among the military chiefs who had outlived the wars and upsets after the overthrow of Porfirio Díaz. Its essence was compromise between a true democracy with political parties, and dictatorship of a political boss as had happened in the other Latin-American countries.

The regime born of the Mexican revolution lived on for many years before anyone called its legitimacy into question. The events of 1968, which culminated in the slaughter of several hundred students, seriously shattered this legitimacy, already worn thin by half a century of uninterrupted dominance. Since 1968, and not without contradictions, Mexican governments have been looking for a new legitimacy. The source of the former legitimacy was, on the one hand, historical or rather genealogical, since the regime has always considered itself not only the successor but the heir of the revolutionary chiefs by right of primogeniture. On the other hand, it was constitutional, since it was the result of formal and legal elections. The new legality sought by the regime is based on the recognition that other parties and political projects exist—that is to say, it is based on pluralism. And this is one step toward democracy.

IN THE LONG RUN and if it does not fail, Political Reform will realize the dream of many Mexicans, a dream continuously postponed since Independence—the transformation of the country into a true, modern democracy. However, in the short run it is legitimate to doubt that a few legalistic measures will be enough to change the political structures of a society. Indeed, before all else we should ask ourselves, which political parties would be able to challenge the PRI for leadership?

Leaving aside the dummy parties that have for years played the role of puppets in the electoral farce, the PRI's only serious rival has been the PAN.

The PAN is a nationalist, Catholic, conservative party, which, as its name indicates (Partido Accion Nacional, National Action Party), grew out of tendencies more or less influenced by the political thinking of Maurras and his Action Française (monarchism and anti-Semitism aside). The PAN has been the eternal loser of elections, though not always legitimately. We must not forget that the PRI is not a party that has won power: it is the political arm of power.

Up to now it has mattered only to a few people that the PRI invariably wins elections. This indifference explains why neither the PAN nor any of the other opposition groups

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on the right or left has been able to organize a national resistance movement. The discontent of the Mexican people has found expression in abstention and skepticism rather than in forms of political activism. Today the regime is looking for a new legality in pluralism, and herein lies the novelty of the situation. But the crisis of the Mexican political system has not favored the PAN, which has not been able to capitalize on the discontent directed at the official party. On the contrary, today the PAN is weaker than it was 15 years ago. On top of everything else, it is torn apart by internal battles and undergoing a sort of identity crisis. Though it is trying to forget its authoritarian and "Maurrasian" leanings, it has not succeeded in becoming a Christian Democratic party.

WHAT ABOUT the other parties?

• The Mexican Communist party is a small organization with little or no influence among the workers, even though it was founded more than 50 years ago, before the PRI. However, thanks to its control of some student groups, and especially of various unions of employees and professors, it has gained strength in the universities. The Mexican Communist party is a university party, and this paradox (which would have scandalized Marx) indicates an appreciable strategic conquest: the universities are one of the country's sensitive spots. No doubt, inspired and encouraged by the example of the European countries (Italy, Spain, and France), the Mexican Communist party has recently declared itself a partisan of democratic pluralism, although it has not renounced Lenin's "democratic centralism." To a certain extent this change implies criticism of its own Stalinist past. Unfortunately, such criticism has not been explicit. Moreover, the Mexican CP has been too timid, and its record is riddled with silences and concealment. It is significant that in recent declarations the Mexican Communist party has shown its affinity to the positions adopted by the French CP, the most conservative and centralist of the three great European Communist parties. (Recently, Althusser described it in *Le Monde* as a closed organization, military in nature, a "fortress."

Another characteristic of the Mexican situation is the total lack of influence of left-wing intellectuals on the evolution of the Mexican Communist party. The change in the European Communist parties is due in good part to the criticism of their dissident intellectuals; in Mexico—with such rare exceptions as José Revueltas, Eduardo Lizalde, and a few others—Marxist intellectuals have been faithful though unimaginative apologists of "historic socialism" through all its contradictory metamorphoses from Stalin to Brezhnev.

• The Mexican Democratic party has origins similar to those of the PAN, though its supporters are not middle-class people but the poor peasants of the central region. This is an authentically plebeian party. It is the direct descendant of the National Sinarchist Union, an organization inspired by a nationalistic and religious populism recognizably based on the traditional aspirations of the revolutionary peasant movements, along with scraps of fascist ideology. Among the Sinarchists the tradition of the agrarian uprisings was still alive, as it had been in Mexican history from the 17th century on. A strange brew: religious brotherhood, fascism and revolutionary *Jacquerie*. The Mexican Democratic party is suffering an identity crisis like that of the PAN, and has not yet defined its new democratic profile. However, though it is poor in material resources and in ideas, it still has an influence over some of the peasant groups in the central areas of the country. These parties have one feature in common: all three would like to forget their authoritarian past. But they have not yet exorcised the ghosts of Maurras, Mussolini, and Stalin . . .

• One political organization that carries no terrible past with it and arose out of a genuine desire for social and democratic change is the Mexican Workers' party (Partido Mexicano de Trabajadores). It was born in the 1968 crisis, and its emergence was looked upon with great sympathy by many groups of

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students and intellectuals, and also by those veterans of the working-class movement of the past who had survived its setbacks. Unfortunately, this party has still not been able to formulate a clear program (nor a clearly democratic one, which is no less serious) to grant it a political physiognomy and to distinguish it from the other left-wing groups. I could mention other independent parties, but they are minuscule in size and have no appreciable strength.

The most casual observer is immediately aware that there are two large gaps in this panorama. One is the lack of a conservative party like the Republican party in the United States or the conservative parties of Great Britain, France, Germany, and Spain. The other is the absence of an authentic socialist party supported by workers, intellectuals, and middle class. The latter is the more lamentable, and casts a harsh light on one of the most serious failings of Mexico and all Latin America: the absence of a democratic socialist tradition.

Will the Mexican pluralism for which Political Reform is preparing be composed of minority parties that barely deserve the adjective democratic? Most likely, far from alleviating the situation, this poor imitation of pluralism will aggravate the regime's identity crisis. Were this to happen the erosion of the PRI would get worse and, in order not to evaporate, the state would have to rely on other social forces: not on a political bureaucracy like the PRI but on a military bureaucracy. There is another remedy, though it is contemplated with horror by the Mexican political caste: to divide the PRI. Perhaps its left wing, united with other forces, could be the nucleus of a true socialist party.

Political Reform was thought up by one of Mexico's most intelligent men, a true intellectual who is also a shrewd politician. However, as we have seen, this project faces the same wall that has blocked the path of other initiatives by our intellectuals and men of state, from Juarez and the liberals of 1857 to our day. It is not a wall of stone or ideas or interests, it is a wall of emptiness. "Between the idea/And the reality/Between the motion/And the Act/Falls the Shadow."

Is Mexico "the dead land . . . cactus land," like the land in Eliot's poem, littered with broken idols and moth-eaten images of saints? Do we just "go round the prickly pear"? But in our mythology this prickly pear is not the plant of the kingdom of the dead; on the contrary, it is the heraldic plant chosen at the founding of Mexico Tenochtitlan, [the Aztecs ancient name for Mexico City] and its blood-red fruit symbolizes the union of the solar element and the primordial water. Perhaps we have mistaken the path; perhaps the way out is to return to our origins.

The situation of the political parties is one of the signs of the ambiguous modernity of Mexico. Another sign is corruption. It is easier to understand this phenomenon if one looks at it from the perspective of persistent patrimonialism. In all the European courts during the 17th and 18th centuries public posts were sold and there was traffic in influences and favors. During the regency of Mariana of Austria, at a moment when the public treasury was hard pressed, her favorite, Don Fernando Valenzuela, decided to consult the theologians as to whether it was admissible to sell to the highest bidder the important positions of the kingdom, among them the viceroyalties of Aragon, New Spain, Peru, and Naples. The theologians found nothing in divine or human laws that was contrary to this practice. The corruption of the Mexican public administration, a scandal at home and abroad, is basically only another manifestation of the persistence of the ways of thinking and feeling exemplified by the dictate of the Spanish theologians. People irreproachable in their private behavior, shining lights of morality on their home ground, have no scruples about disposing of public goods as if they were their own property. The issue is less one of immorality than of the unconscious operation of another set of morals: in the patrimonial regime the frontiers between public and private spheres, family and state are rather vague and fluctuating. If everyone is the king of his house, the kingdom is like a

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house and the nation is like a family. If the state is the king's patrimony, how can it not also be the patrimony of his relations, friends, servants, and favorites? In Spain, significantly enough, the prime minister was called 'Privado' (Favorite).

The presence of a courtly, patrimonialist moral code in the bosom of the Mexican state is another example of our incomplete modernity. We stumble over the disconcerting mixture of modern and archaic traits in the lowest levels of society—the peasants and their religious and moral beliefs—as well as in the middle class and the high bourgeoisie. The modernization of Mexico, begun at the close of the 18th century by the viceroys of Charles III, continues to be a half-completed task that affects our consciousness only superficially. Most of our profound attitudes to love, death, friendship, food, festivals are not modern. Nor are our public morality, our family life, the cult of the Virgin, our image of the president . . . Why not? I have tried to answer this question elsewhere. Here I will only repeat that we Mexicans have undertaken various projects of modernization since the time of the great Hispanic schism (the crisis at the end of the 18th century and its consequence, Independence). Not only have all these projects proved unworkable but they have disfigured us. Masks of Robespierre and Bonaparte, Jefferson and Lincoln, Comte and Marx, Lenin and Mao: if history is theater, our country's history has been a masquerade interrupted time and again by the explosions of riots and revolts.

I do not preach return to a past, imaginary as are all pasts, nor do I advocate that we go back into the clutches of a tradition that was strangling us. I believe that Mexico, like the other Latin-American countries, must find her own modernity. In a certain sense she must invent it. But she must start with the ways of living and dying, acquiring and spending, working and playing that our people has created. It is a task that demands not only favorable historic and social circumstances, but an extraordinary realism and a no less extraordinary imagination. The rebirth of imagination, in the realm of art as in that of politics, has always been prepared for and preceded by analysis and criticism. I believe that this duty has fallen to our generation and the next. But before undertaking the criticism of our societies, their history and their actuality, we Hispanoamerican writers must begin by criticizing ourselves. First we must cure ourselves of the intoxication of simplistic and simplifying ideologies.

— *Translated by* RACHEL PHILLIPS □

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Ernest Erber

White Flight & Political Retreat

Charging that desegregation of schools causes "white flight," the neoconservatives have now joined the fight against large-scale integration of big-city school systems. The signal for the attack was James S. Coleman's recent repudiation of his findings that had for some 12 years served as the main factual and analytical underpinning of the prointegration argument.

In 1966 Coleman, a sociologist then at Johns Hopkins University and now at the University of Chicago, directed a massive congressionally ordered study to determine how the education of minority children is affected by segregation and integration. The study's voluminous report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, was accepted by most judges and educational administrators as the most authoritative documentation of the subject available.

In 1975 Coleman announced a startling change of opinion on the implications of his 1966 report, much to the dismay of his erstwhile adherents and to the glee of his former conservative critics. Coleman was quoted as saying that the courts had read more into his 1966 report than was warranted. He followed this statement with a paper arguing that court-ordered desegregation was proving disastrous to city-school systems by causing an exodus of white pupils.[1]

Coleman's abandonment of his earlier position created a gap in the civil-rights defenses through which the neoconservatives now seek to charge, hoping to overpower affirmative measures for integration, such as busing for racial balance, and perhaps even to undo the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which held that "separate but equal" schools are unconstitutional. Typical of this neoconservative thrust is Diane Ravitch's defense of Coleman's new position in the spring 1978 issue of the *Public Interest*.

Ravitch's article is devoted to a refutation of the sharp criticism directed at Coleman by a number of his peers in the social sciences, the most prominent among them Reynolds Farley, Thomas F. Pettigrew, Robert L. Green, and Christine H. Rossell, with the latter singled out by Ravitch for most attention.[2]

In anticipation of the inescapable charge that her defense of James Coleman's opposition to large-scale integration of big-city school systems amounts to endorsement of a segregated status quo, Ravitch cautiously enters a disclaimer: "Certainly, no one—least of all, Coleman—would propose maintaining racially segregated schools as a way of inducing whites to remain in city schools."

If Coleman and Ravitch are not proposing racially segregated schools as a cure for "white flight," what are they proposing? Based on the internal evidence of Ravitch's article, even without recourse to the voluminous literature generated by the controversy, their position leads to no other conclusion than that less integration and more segregation is the remedy for shrinking white enrollments. Ravitch's formal disclaimer is but a parry by a debater whose main thrust contradicts it.

Busing per se is not the issue. As Ravitch notes, "Coleman argued that, independent of

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the specific causes (e.g., a court order) leading to it, an increase in the degree to which whites are exposed to blacks seemed, under certain circumstances, to reduce the number of whites." Exactly! But this is not a new phenomenon. Nor has it just been discovered. Ever since Africans were brought to these shores, whites have either determined the conditions of propinquity or exercised the option of separating themselves to the extent that this was possible. That whites, to varying degrees, have a desire to separate themselves from blacks and that, therefore, varying numbers of whites will exercise this option under certain circumstances has to be accepted as a given in race relations and should serve as an initial assumption in anticipating the likely consequences of change.

The actual experience of the last two decades with large-scale efforts to reduce racial segregation in public-school systems, however, is new. Efforts to evaluate the results of this experience are beset with extremely complex problems that defy quick and easy conclusions. As Ravitch observes about one aspect of the results:

> It seems unlikely that we will ever know with any degree of certainty whether whites (and some middle-class blacks) are leaving the city because of concern about desegregation or crime or poor services or racial tensions or the quality of life or for some other reason or combination of reasons.

Coleman, however, *is* sure that the reason is school desegregation, and Ravitch, making reference to Coleman's "econometric model," is ready to endorse his conclusions, because, in addition to his "mathematical models" (which she finds "too technical to summarize easily"), they "also seem to conform to common sense and experience." Recognizing that "the controversy over Coleman's findings is a struggle over the future of policy," she is prepared to join him in applying the brakes to desegregation, at least in big-city school systems, despite the above quoted confession of uncertainty as to the causes of "white flight."

Ravitch marshalls figures to demonstrate that integration efforts in Boston schools caused white enrollment to drop sharply in 1974 (16.2 percent of that of the previous year) and in 1975 (19.3 percent). This can hardly be disputed. Given the fact that school buildings and grounds were turned into bloody battlefields by the policies of an irresponsibly intransigent school board and by a vacillating mayor (with the publicly expressed aid and comfort of Presidents Nixon and Ford), there should be little suprise that large numbers of white parents withdrew their children from the public schools during the worst years of turmoil. But as the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported to the President in 1976,

> . . . in most communities desegregation has gone peacefully and smoothly—for every Boston and Louisville there are dozens of other communities, which have received no headlines and attracted no television coverage, where desegregation is proceeding without major incident.[3]

Other than during riot situations similar to Boston's, decline of white enrollment in big-city school systems has been at a much lower annual rate than is indicated by Ravitch's figures for Boston in 1974 and 1975. But it has been steady and seemingly unending, until few such cities have white majorities in their schools today. Ravitch presents a table of figures to demonstrate the decline in white enrollment. Though the table achieves this with dramatic impact, it offers no evidence as to cause. If anything, her data undermines Coleman's easy assumption that the cause of white loss is "an increase in the degree to which whites are exposed to blacks." Ravitch's table shows the percentage of white loss in each of the 29 largest cities in the United States from 1968 to 1976. Her table does not show percentage of minority increase in these systems. It is the juxtaposition of percentages of change for both groups that undermines Coleman's assumption as to cause and effect. For there is no pattern or correlation between percentage of white loss and minority gain!

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New York City, with one of the largest percentage increases of minority enrollment (14.3 percent), has one of the smaller percentages of white loss (29.8 percent). Detroit with a massive white loss (61.9 percent) had a minority increase of only 5.2 percent. Philadelphia experienced a white loss of 25.1 percent, but a minority gain of only 1 percent. In Baltimore, Cleveland, Washington, St. Louis, New Orleans, San Francisco, Cincinnati, San Antonio, Pittsburgh, and Kansas City, minority enrollment *decreased* between 1968 and 1976, but white flight was as great in these cities as in those in which there was an increase in minority presence. In Nashville and Indianapolis, minority enrollment remained virtually unchanged during these years—again without halting white flight. More than half of San Antonio's white enrollment disappeared during a time when its minority enrollment was *dropping* by 2.8 percent!

It might be argued that whites flee in reaction to how many blacks are present in a given school, not in the system as whole. This causes one to ask why white enrollment dropped by over 40 percent in the Chicago school system from 1968 to 1976, though it remained the most segregated large-city system in the country. In 1974, the latest year for which figures were available, Chicago still had five elementary schools without a single minority child enrolled. Another 86 schools had less than 10 percent minority enrollment. White parents had a choice of 142 elementary schools in which white enrollment was over 70 percent (in a school system in which whites constitute 25 percent). On the other hand, the vast majority of Chicago's minority children attended 310 schools with minority enrollments of 80 percent or more (with no less than 201 of these schools having 100 percent minority enrollment).

The Chicago school system is certainly the example *par excellence* of adherence to the Coleman/Ravitch policy of "a cautious and deliberate approach that takes into account the possibility of white flight and desegregation." And still, the whites fled!

Or maybe they didn't—at least not as *whites*. The complexity of urban demographic phenomena suggests caution in the use of the term "white flight." One can easily be misled by the appearance of race as a surrogate for economic class. Upper-class whites fled from lower-class whites long before blacks became a factor in city population shifts. It was income, not race, that historically determined the dynamics of mobility within American cities—the poor entering the oldest neighborhoods near the center, and the rich exiting over the boundaries to new suburban areas.

Because the mobility of blacks was inhibited by discrimination, they were severely restricted in their ability to move outward through the successive residential rings within which the population was stratified, more or less by income. Though race distorted this economic pattern of residential location, the latter remained the dominant factor shaping population distribution in American metropolitan areas.

In recent years the poor still entered at the center of cities, and the upwardly mobile still moved outward as they moved upward, and the middle and upper classes still opted for the least densely developed outer areas. The poor who entered, however, and the upwardly mobile working-class populations that moved outward were increasingly likely to have a darker skin than their predecessors in the earlier history of American cities. Though whites tend to move when outnumbered, and when attractive alternative locations are available elsewhere, it is still necessary to examine changing population distribution in terms of income levels. The role of income in population distribution is evident in the increasing number of middle-class blacks locating in the suburbs. It is necessary, therefore, to see population movement primarily in terms of the historic role of economic class, and only secondarily in terms of racial patterns that distort basic economic determinants.

In a paper presented at a day-long "consultation" of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, occasioned by the controversy over Coleman's critique of desegregation policy, at which Coleman was a participant, Dr. Robert

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C. Weaver warned that

> because we are a racist society, there is a tendency to attribute all or most of the problems of our cities to the presence of racial minorities. This leads to two equally misleading conclusions. The first, and most dangerous, is to assume that were we racially homogeneous the cities would have none of the crucial problems that they face. The second, in a large measure a reaction to the over-emphasis on the racial issue, is the assertion that race is not relevant to the city's problems.[4]

Weaver's paper traces the historical pattern of metropolitan development to document the declining weight of the central city within its urban setting and notes that "the year 1900 marked the apex of preponderance of population for a number of central cities in relation to their suburbs." Since 1950, he points out, employment in suburbs began to increase at a more rapid rate than that of their central cities and "in many of the large metropolitan areas the central city recorded an absolute loss in number of jobs, while their suburban rings gained spectacularly."

The broad historical, social and economic context within which Weaver treats the declining significance of central cities and its impact upon the opportunities and status of whites and blacks is singularly absent from the Ravitch article, a crippling defect it seems to share with the contributions of most of the other antagonists in the Coleman controversy, whether pro or con. How can one attribute causes for the declining number of whites in city schools if one's view is restricted to the Office of Education's computer printouts of school enrollment by race?

Take the matter of population decline of major cities, a condition affecting almost all of them except those in the Southwest and West. Nowhere in the Ravitch article is there any indication that the economic viability of a city and/or its metropolitan area might be related to population movement by race and, consequently, to changes in the racial composition of school enrollments. Ravitch notes that there was a loss of 88,693 whites from the Chicago school system between 1968 and 1976. Has it no relevance for this phenomenon that between 1970 and 1975 (a mere five years compared to her eight-year school enrollment period), the number of housing units occupied by whites in Chicago declined by 123,400?[5] This represented a loss of about 24,680 white-occupied housing units per year, compared to a loss of about 11,086 white pupils per year from the school system. Obviously, if the number of white households disappearing from the city of Chicago were more than twice as many as the number of white pupils disappearing from its school system, dissatisfaction with schools cannot be the main, or even primary, cause for movement of whites out of the city. (This calculation does not reflect those mover households that withdraw two or more pupils from school, thereby necessarily shrinking pupil-related households and increasing households without pupils.)

Though the *number* of white-occupied housing units in the suburban areas outside of Chicago increased by 144,500 between 1970 and 1975, compared to an increase in minority-occupied units of only 22,500, the latter represents a *rate* of increase of 45.8 percent, compared to the whites' rate of increase of only 14.4 percent. Obviously, all of the 22,500 additional minority households that appeared in Chicago's suburbs did not move there from the central city. Many represent new family formations and movement from other parts of the country. But with reference to those thousands of minority families that did move from Chicago to its suburbs, it is necessary to ask of Coleman and Ravitch to explain what caused this *minority* flight? (Oddly, Ravitch makes passing reference to this phenomenon by parenthetically adding "some middle-class blacks" to the whites who are fleeing the city, without, however, feeling called upon to explain this contradiction of Coleman's thesis about the "degree to which whites are exposed to blacks" as cause of movement out from cities.)

Weaver warns against concluding that because racial factors cannot explain all urban phenomena, racial factors shoud be

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dismissed as noneffective. Segregated residential patterns have not changed appreciably in the big cities whose school systems are under discussion here. If anything, ghettos have extended their boundaries as the minority population has grown and as whites have shifted to the suburbs. Racial minorities remain sharply underrepresented in suburban populations, even when the potential minority residents are considered to be only those with incomes at, or over, the average for all residents of a given city's suburbs (or limited to only those minority households already paying as much, or more, for housing than is the average for all residents of a given city's suburbs).[6]

The extensive and persistent discrimination against racial minorities by brokers and rental agents in 40 selected metropolitan areas was elaborately documented in a recent survey by the National Committee Against Discrimination in Housing, under contract to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.[7]

An additional piece of evidence that contradicts the Coleman/Ravitch thesis is the sharp drop in enrollment in Chicago's Catholic parochial schools, consisting of 386 elementary and 21 high schools. Though the parochial schools' minority enrollment has grown, the increase is at a rate far less than that in the public schools. Total enrollment in parochial schools, however, as reported in the *New York Times*, June 8, 1978, has declined at the same rate as the public system. This situation also suggests that the movement of whites out of the city is not primarily school-related.

It might still be argued that though whites leave central cities for a number of reasons unrelated to schools, the maintenance of racially segregated schools could influence some white families to stay. This cannot be denied. It would help to hold these whites even more if laws forbidding discrimination in housing were repealed. Similar action with regard to public accommodations, voting, and employment is likely to further slow down the white exodus. Coleman and Ravitch would obviously spurn such proposals. One wonders, therefore, how they can permit themselves to become trapped in a thesis that would result in a policy of applying the brakes to school desegregation.

Ravitch advances the Atlanta solution as a model. This argues for giving up on desegregation and concentrating on quality education, regardless of racial balances. Is she arguing that racial balance destroys the prospects for quality education? What is there about integrated schools that undermines quality? The answer to this question given by most parents fighting proposed integration of all-white schools is not likely to be acceptable to Ravitch. This answer, given by a white parent opposing busing in Richmond, Va., as quoted in the *Washington Post*, January 17, 1972, was, "It's not the distance, it's the niggers."

Where minority enrollment constitutes an overwhelming majority of the school system (90 percent in Atlanta), "integration" by parceling out the remaining whites throughout the system would obviously have no practical effect in meeting the court's injunction against the inequality of "separate" schools. Nor could it possibly be justified on educational grounds for either white or black students. This is no argument, however, for keeping the 10 percent of white students in 100 percent white schools out of fear they might leave the system if, in Coleman's words, they are "exposed to blacks."

For the 90 percent black enrollment in Atlanta's school systems, there is obviously no other course than, to quote Ravitch, "stressing the kind of curriculum and values that will enable black children (and white children) to succeed in the mainstrean of American life. . . ." It is puzzling that Ravitch should find it so remarkable for Atlanta's black educational leadership to have chosen this course. She could hardly have expected them to have declared that quality education for Atlanta's black children would be impossible for lack of white children with whom to integrate.

Advocates of desegregation of schools have never argued that quality education of

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minority children is impossible in all-minority schools. To argue this would fly in the face of the fact that many all-black primary and secondary schools have achieved outstanding records of quality performance, the names of some of these schools having become legendary.

Quality education in black schools does not, however, contradict the validity of the Supreme Court's finding that "separate"—for racial minorities in a predominantly racist society—is inherently "unequal." This finding constitutes a landmark on the historic battleground against segregation. Above all other considerations, including the voluminous statistics marshalled by Coleman and his critics, the Court's decision stands as principle; *segregation is wrong and should not be tolerated.* This is why the NAACP board chose to suspend its Atlanta chapter, rather than to condone surrender of this principle. Should this principle then be abandoned, or even compromised, to reduce white flight?

Viewed within the context of the historic struggle of blacks for equality in American society, arguments based on the "practical" consequences of school integration shrivel. The solution is not to retreat to an acceptance of segregation, but to advance to where the Court feared to tread, *viz.* inclusion of suburban schools in metropolitan integration orders. Statewide desegregation in Florida, effective in cities, suburbs, and rural areas, by state-court order was accomplished without white flight from either the state or its schools.[8] To the extent that the exodus of whites from cities is primarily racial in motivation, it will stop when whites are convinced, in the words of the spiritual, that "There Ain't No Hiding Place Down Here." Until then, preserving segregation in school systems will serve no useful purpose. Ending desegregation efforts will, however, constitute a setback to the struggle of racial minorities for equality. The majority of whites who oppose busing will see it that way, as will the majority of blacks who continue to favor busing for racial balance in schools. □

Notes

[1]James S. Coleman, Sarah D. Kelly, and John A. Moore, *Trends in School Desegregation, 1968-73* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, August 1975).

[2]Reynolds Farley, *School Integration and White Flight* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Population Studies Center, August 1975). Thomas F. Pettigrew and Robert L. Green, "School Desegregation in Large Cities: A Critique of the Coleman, 'White Flight' Thesis," *Harvard Education Review*, February 1976. Christine H. Rossell, *The Unintended Impacts of Public Policy; School Desegregation and Resegregation* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University, Institute of Policy Sciences, 1978).

[3]Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law—Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools, Report (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, August 1976).

[4]Robert C. Weaver, "The Suburbanization of America," in *School Desegregation: the Courts and Suburban Migration* (Washington; D.C.: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, December 8, 1975).

[5]*Annual Housing Survey: 1975, Current Housing Report, Series H-170-75-22,* U.S. Bureau of the Census.

One cause of this loss of white households is the 16 percent decrease in jobs in manufacturing in Chicago between 1963 and 1972 (see *City Need and the Responsiveness of Federal Grant Programs*, Subcommittee on the City of Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs, House of Representatives 1978).

[6]*The Potential for Residential Integration in Cities and Suburb: Implications for the Busing Controversy,* paper by Albert I. Hermalin and Reynolds Farley (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Population Studies Center, 1973).

[7]*Fair Housing Evaluation—Background Paper on the Housing Market Practices Survey* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Policy Development and Research, Department of Housing and Urban Development, April 1978).

[8]*White Flight, Demographic Transition, and the Future of School Desegregation*, by David J. Armor with the assistance of Donna Schwartzbach (Santa Monica, Calif: Rand Corp., 1978), p. 17. □

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Charles Beitz

Global Egalitarianism: Can We Make Out a Case?

Why should global poverty concern the affluent? Why do the global poor have a claim on the sympathy, the political energy, and the economic resources of the rich?

These questions take on a new urgency as the dimensions of global poverty come to be widely recognized.[1] Slowly, a consensus seems to be emerging that the affluent nations must undertake concerted action to help the "forgotten 40 percent" of the human population. This consensus finds an echo in the widespread sympathy with which the Third World's program for a "New International Economic Order" (NIEO) has been received. At the same time skeptical and pseudorealistic voices are declaring that the claims of the Third World on the rest of us are in fact overstated or nonexistent.

As a result, the questions posed above are now being widely discussed—not merely the problem of how to help the poor nations but whether and in what ways we are obligated to do so. I propose here to examine the main arguments customarily offered for supporting such programs as the NIEO, as well as some of the problems that might follow its implementation.

The reasons for asking these questions are not entirely Socratic. Our assessment of the NIEO proposals depends largely on why we think any such proposals deserve sympathetic attention. As I hope to show, a deeper understanding of the moral basis of Third World claims will in turn make clear in what respects the NIEO is incomplete, and illuminate some potential dilemmas involved in completing them.

Charity

WHY DO the global poor deserve a better deal? One's immediate response is that those seriously deprived of the means of life have an automatic claim on our sympathy and, when appropriate, our political energy and economic resources. The argument rests on considerations of charity: whenever we can help alleviate human suffering, we should. The character of our relationship to those who suffer does not matter; indeed, we need have no special relationship at all. All that matters is that suffering exists; when it does, we should act to alleviate it.

This argument has undeniable force, but not so much as one might think. Arguments of charity have notorious limits. They allow us to beg off when the costs of action are significant. Other concerns, closer to home, will compete for our resources, and in any event, there always lurks in the background the question, "Why me?" That is, "Why should I sacrifice when not everybody else will?" Moreover, since arguments of charity concentrate on immediate distress rather than underlying social structures, they define the problem in superficial terms. Such arguments may seem to be satisfied when distress is relieved even though underlying causes remain untouched.

On neither point does the charity argument

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capture widely held views about the moral seriousness of the poor countries' claims. These claims demand concerted and potentially costly action by the rich—action aimed at the sources of poverty rather than merely its immediate manifestation. In both respects, the poor countries have attracted many sympathizers among progressives in the affluent North. Sympathy for the poor South, therefore, must be based on more fundamental moral concerns than charity.

More far-reaching arguments for the claims of the poor result from taking seriously the relative as well as absolute dimensions of world poverty. To take note of global distributive inequality is to suggest that the poverty of the many and the affluence of the few are somehow connected. If so, then the character of the connection may explain why the claims of the poor seem to carry more weight than the argument of charity allows.

Reparations

HOW ARE global affluence and global poverty connected? And what does the connection imply about Third World claims? It is sometimes said that the affluence-poverty connection is historical. The affluent countries are said to be responsible for the plight of the poor countries because, to put it crudely, in the past the rich used their political power to extract large surpluses from colonial dependencies. Indigenous social formations were broken down, economic structures distorted, and new needs created that could only be satisfied by the extractive, dependent relationship with the metropole. The colonial tie worked like a siphon: once the outward flow of resources was set in motion, it perpetuated itself, moving well beyond the temporal limits of the colonial period. Political imperialism was supplanted by economic imperialism, colonial armies by comprador military governments, and state-based trading companies by multinational corporations.

Since poverty is seen as having been exacerbated by imperialism, the demand to reverse the flow of resources can be interpreted as a demand to rectify past wrongs. And since affluence is seen as having been partly attained by taking advantage of unequal power relations, the same demand can be interpreted as a demand to restore to their rightful owners advantages unjustly gained. Either way, the poor countries' claims are claims for reparations.

No doubt, the picture sketched in the last paragraphs is overly simple. For example, the position as presented combines two logically independent empirical claims, namely, that imperialism imposed net costs on colonial countries and that it resulted in net gains for metropolitan ones. But the essential weakness of the argument does not really involve these empirical issues. Its main weakness is the unstated premise that the heirs of those who gained benefits unjustly have obligations to make restitution to the successors of the deprived. Without questioning the injustice of imperialism, present-day citizens of the rich countries might ask why they should bear the costs of rectifying injustices in which they took no part. One might be tempted to reply that their favored position is partly a *result* of these past injustices, and so the rich do not *deserve* their present, favored status. But it is a real question whether *anyone* deserves the social position that is inherited, regardless of the justice or injustice of the means by which the predecessors attained them. Suppose that Rockefeller's grandfather acquired all of his wealth in morally benign ways. Would that fact make any difference at all to our view that the present Rockefellers don't deserve all the wealth they inherited? Injustice done by previous generations seems irrelevant to whether members of *present* generations deserve what they have. If this is right, then it is no longer clear that the reparations argument for the poor countries' claim is compelling, even if its empirical premises are granted.

This is a surprising conclusion, since at first glance the reparations argument seems plausible. Why? It is not the demonstration of past injustices that is compelling but the implicit contention that these injustices continue to exist. The focus on historical

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considerations obscures this while it opens the argument to the sort of attack I have outlined. But if it is *present* injustice that needs to be redressed, then the complicated moral arguments and even more complicated historical arguments about the nature of imperialism are beside the point. It would be better to ask what is at present unjust about rich-poor relations.

Dependency

A NATURAL RESPONSE would be that the residue of imperialism is itself unjust. This is the moral critique implicit in various theories of economic dependency. These theories involve several claims about the effects on poor and ex-colonial countries of their economic relations with the rich, although none of these theories makes any essential reference to explicitly historical considerations.

First, it is argued that participation in the capitalist world ecónomy produces distortions in the economic structures of poor countries, for example, by encouraging the development of capital-intensive manufacturing where there are vast numbers of unemployed persons, or by discouraging local entrepreneurs from activities aimed at satisfying the needs of the bulk of the population. Second, it is claimed that participation in the world economy produces political distortions, by generating an outward-looking elite with disproporationate political affluence that prevents the local government from governing in the interests of all its citizens. Third, it is alleged that the unequal power relations in the world economy force the poor countries to engage in trade and to accept foreign investment on exploitative terms. For example, multinational corporations with technological monopolies extract monopoly rents as the price of locating manufacturing facilities in poor countries, or they employ local labor at wages far below those paid in more developed countries. As if each claim were not bad enough, the three taken together are mutually reinforcing. Economic distortions perpetuate political ones, and both kinds reduce the ability of the dependent state to seek improvements in the terms of trade and investment.[2]

The moral critique implicit in these charges holds that poor people in poor countries are victims of a double injustice brought on by participation in the capitalist world economy. They suffer the consequences of *domestic* social injustice because they live in societies characterized by acute inequality. Domestic income inequalities exacerbate existing poverty, while inequalities of political power make it almost impossible for disadvantaged classes to improve their position. These domestic injustices are compounded by *international* political and economic inequalities. Even if it were possible for disadvantaged classes in poor countries to redress domestic injustices, they would still find themselves up against the overwhelming political power of rich countries and the economic resources of multinational corporations based there. On the other hand, even if poor countries succeeded in reordering the world economy in a way that secured better terms of trade and investment, the disadvantaged classes in poor countries would still find themselves up against domestic social injustices. Clearly, the double injustice indentified by dependency theory means that adequate strategies of change must simultaneously address domestic and international injustices, and the structures that perpetuate them.

Considered as the basis of an argument for the poor countries' claims, dependency theory has two advantages over the other arguments here considered. It does not rest the demand for present remedial action only on assertions about wrongs done by previous generations; and it does assert that a connection exists between present affluence and present poverty. Thus it can be argued that the income of the global rich is being unjustly won, and that the world economy should be reordered to reallocate income to those being unjustly deprived.

But the dependency argument also has weaknesses, although not fatal ones. In particular, the argument seems to depend on the accuracy of saying that the relations

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between rich and poor countries are exploitative. The rich are said to prosper *because of* their relations with the poor, and the poor to suffer *because of* their relation with the rich. What is pictured is the contemporary equivalent of the "siphoning off" that was supposed to result from imperialism.

This picture is controversial in at least three ways. First, the gains to the rich from their relations with the dependent poor may not be very significant. It is often pointed out, for example, that income from trade with the poor countries contributes only a small percentage of the combined national incomes of the industrial countries. If so, it is implausible to suggest that the rich stay rich because they exploit the poor. Second, it is sometimes said that the dependent poor are only *relatively* (but not absolutely) disadvantaged by participation in the capitalist world economy. Nonparticipants would be far worse off than those in the most dependent of poor countries. Third, it is not generally true that the degree of a country's dependence varies with the depth of its poverty. For example, if a country's degree of dependence can be roughly measured by the percentage of foreign ownership of its capital stock or by the percentage of its national income attributable to trade, then it can be shown that the poorest of the poor countries are not the most dependent. If so, it is not clear that dependency is an essential cause even of relative disadvantage.

Egalitarianism

TO EACH of these possible objections to the dependency argument, there are replies of varying plausibility. I shall not pursue them, however, since there is another argument for the poor countries' claims, involving a straightforward appeal to distributive justice that builds on some elements of dependency theory while avoiding the problematic conclusion that dependency relations are the main *causes* of the extreme global disparities of wealth and poverty.

The problem of distributive justice is customarily considered in domestic society, so we might begin to think about it at that level. As philosophers such as Aristotle and Hume have recognized, the problem arises because a society is not merely a collection of self-sufficient individuals; it is a group in which a division of labor exists such that no one (or almost no one) produces all that he or she needs. The problem of distributive justice is to determine the morally best way in which the social product can be shared among the members of society. It can be argued (although I won't do so here) that the just society is one whose institutions distribute the social product relatively equally—"relatively" because some inequalities might be justified by considerations of desert, or need, or (as John Rawls has argued) the requirements of raising the absolute position of society's worst-off group.[3] The point is that relative equality is at least a rough approximation of what distributive justice requires. It goes without saying that the main concern of distributive justice is not with setting terms for each particular transaction, but rather with identifying political-economic institutions most likely to yield just distributions over time.

Though familiar enough, all this is necessary to set the background for a more immediate question: why should distributive justice stop, as it were, at a country's borders? Distributive justice gets its grip on us as people who occupy positions in a social division of labor. But if the division of labor is global, then the logic that supports domestic egalitarianism appears to support global egalitarianism as well.

The egalitarian argument does not involve controversial premises concerning the particular costs and benefits of dependency. In fact, it makes clear that what is truly significant—and not in dispute—about dependency is that it characterizes a global division of labor. The world's aggregate product is a *social* product, raising the question of how that product should be shared. If one believes that distributive claims rest on a person's participation in social production, it appears that one should assess

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international distributive claims just as one assesses domestic ones. In a world in which state boundaries do not set off discrete systems of social production, egalitarianism in one country does not make sense. A consistent egalitarianism must take the world as its subject.[4]

The egalitarian argument does not dispute another key thesis of dependency theory, namely, that one of the main mechanisms of inequality is the dependent state itself. Thus, a commitment to global egalitarianism need not limit itself to the reform of inegalitarian structures at the international level. To the extent that social structures in dependent states contribute to internal inequalities, global egalitarianism yields a moral case for internal reform as well.

TWO OBJECTIONS to this position recently have been voiced by Robert W. Tucker.

First, while recognizing the growth of a world economy involving an international division of labor, Tucker claims that state boundaries continue to delimit communities within which egalitarianism is a plausible distributive principle: "It is the state that, more often than not, has created the degree of interdependence identified with community."[5]

This is a true, historical observation. But it is not clear why Tucker's historical observation is relevant to the egalitarian argument. If the mark of a community is the existence of a social division of labor and the economic interdependence it entails, and if the existence of community, so defined, is a precondition of distributive justice, then the facts of international economic life leave no alternative to accepting the egalitarian argument, globally applied. Tucker's reading of the history of states does not undermine this reasoning.

But perhaps Tucker means to press a different argument. Correctly noticing that some forms of socioeconomic cooperation are more intense than others, he might want to claim that only cooperation within states is sufficiently intense to trigger the familiar requirements of distributive egalitarianism. This reformulation does not salvage his argument, however, because even domestic cooperation varies in intensity, and it is plausible that many to whom we readily acknowledge egalitarian distributive obligations make only marginal contributions to economic life and are only marginally affected by it. If so, the point about the intensity of cooperation does not distinguish global from domestic justice.

Neither does it help to point out the subjective differences between domestic and global societies. No one would seriously dispute that people generally feel stronger ties to other members of their own societies than to those elsewhere. But the temptation should be resisted to draw interferences about the limits of distributive obligations, since it is not clear how feelings of community affiliation are relevant to the argument of egalitarianism. Indeed, such feelings are notoriously unreliable guides to the limits of moral ties, more often functioning as rationalizations for inaction than as true indicators of the reach of our responsibilities.

Tucker's second objection is more frequently heard and more easily disposed of. It is that the poor countries' claims are claims for equality among *states,* whereas the egalitarian argument given above urges equality among *persons.* To some, like Tucker, it seems mistaken to advance the egalitarian argument in support of the poor countries' claims. It is a confusion, he suggests, to apply an interpersonal standard internationally.[6]

There is a confusion, but it is Tucker's. Since countries contain people, international redistribution *is* interpersonal redistribution. Moreoever, it is not implausible to suggest that the goal of interpersonal egalitarianism might be served by promoting transfers from rich to poor countries. Of course, this goal will not be achieved by transfers alone; as dependency theory makes clear, a country's domestic structure might keep large infusions from the outside from ever reaching the bottom. Tucker's confusion is to take this possibility as an objection in principle to international egalitarianism, whereas the possibility, in fact, counsels caution about what can be expected from interstate transfers

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unaccompanied by reforms inside poor societies. The egalitarian argument not only does not ignore such reforms, but might require them.

The Poor Country's Proposals

IT IS one thing to endorse global egalitarianism as the moral principle underlying the poor countries' claims for reform of the world economy. It is another to accept their policy proposals as satisfying this principle. Between principle and policy lie political-economic practices and structures that could frustrate the reformers' best intentions. In evaluating the poor countries' proposals, we must not only ask whether they are consistent with their moral underpinnings but also consider how an attempt to carry them out might be subverted by powerful forces in the world economy and in the domestic societies of rich and poor countries.

The Third World program—much of which is embodied in proposals for a "New International Economic Order" (NIEO)—consists of reforms in the world economic system designed to increase the flow of income to poor countries. Some involve direct transfers from the rich countries, such as increased foreign aid, increased credit at more favorable terms, and forgiveness of the poor countries' debts to public and private lenders. Other reforms would enable poor countries to compete more successfully in world trade by assuring their products access to rich-country markets; these include extension to poor countries of tariff preferences and lowering of nontariff barriers to trade. Some reforms combine direct transfers with attempts to improve the developing countries' capacity to compete in world trade; the proposal for a series of commodity reserves financed by common funds, in particular, is designed to stabilize commodity prices at a level above their current average market levels. Further proposals envision the creation of ostensibly new wealth to which the developing countries would have special access. This includes a new round of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) in the International Monetary Fund and establishment of an International Seabed Authority to oversee the exploitation of seabed minerals and to distribute the proceeds to developing countries. Finally, the poor countries propose a series of constitutional reforms in international financial institutions to shift the balance of decision-making power in their favor.[7]

Do these proposals measure up to the demands of global egalitarianism? Full implementation of the NIEO program would certainly produce a transfer of income to the poor countries, especially via debt forgiveness and increased aid flows. Distribution of SDRs to poor countries and of the gains from exploitation of the seabed would also increase their income. Preferential access to rich-country markets would attract foreign investment and lead to an increase in employment. The commodity-price stabilization scheme would even out cyclical fluctuations in prices, protect the economic position of small farmers, and increase the foreign exchange earnings of resource-rich countries. (On the other hand, the commodity proposals, which are mainly oriented toward cash crops, will not necessarily help in the crucial effort to increase domestic production of food. In this respect, the NIEO is deficient and needs to be supplemented by an aggressive multilateral effort to improve agricultural productivity.) But the absolute amounts involved in the proposals for direct transfers are not large, and the trade measures, while on balance beneficial to the poor countries, will not produce great gains in employment in the short run. More important, these measures would not reduce the gap between industrialized and developing countries, because none would bring about substantial changes in the world economy.[8] So viewed, the NIEO program is progressive but very moderate.

The egalitarian argument aims ultimately at improving the conditions of poor *people*. Intercountry transfers must be viewed as means toward this end. But none of the NIEO proposals explicitly addresses the issue of income distribution inside the poor countries, and so they cannot be viewed as constituting a

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complete attempt to decrease global interpersonal inequality. This has prompted some to suggest that a domestic distributional component be built into the NIEO program. For example, the level of direct transfers might be made to depend partly on the adoption by recipient countries of appropriate redistributive policies, or on the use of assistance to satisfy the basic needs of their worst-off classes.

Some poor countries will doubtless object to the imposition of internal distributional conditions on the grounds that these violate their sovereignty. In some cases there may be political reasons for heeding the objections, but these objections have no basis in the egalitarian principle. After all, the justification for direct transfers itself requires that the transfers be used to narrow the global gap between rich and poor *persons;* to lay claim to a larger share of global income without acknowledging a responsibility to address that gap is to make a claim without foundation.

This is not to say that rich countries would be justified in imposing *any* conditions likely to promote internal redistribution among the poor. It is one thing to demand changes in investment policies, another to interfere in an election, and still another to require compulsory birth control. Any of these might, under imaginable circumstances, promote a more egalitarian distribution, but some ways of doing this are obviously preferable to others. What is important is that the reasons why some ways of imposing distributional conditions are preferable to others have little to do with sovereignty and much to do with such other moral concerns as personal and political liberty. Considerations about sovereignty ought not be used as an argument against imposing conditions favoring better internal distribution of transfer payments; but such conditions may be open to criticism on other grounds.

In any case, there are clear practical limits to the domestic distributional reforms that can be expected to accompany a program of transfers. These arise mainly from two sources. The less basic is the fungibility of money. Even if aid dollars are restricted to egalitarian policies that directly satisfy basic needs, a country wishing to keep an inegalitarian internal distribution can accept such aid but evade its intent by reallocating other funds to less egalitarian uses. This point, obvious when stated so abstractly, is often forgotten in specific cases. For example, attempts by the U.S. Congress to influence human rights policies of other governments by withholding military but not economic aid merely invites creative bookkeeping: economic aid replaces domestic spending on social services, which is redirected to military uses.

A more basic problem has to do with the structural roots of inequality. Distributive inequality is related to the political and economic structure of a society. Countries with market economies, strong bourgeoisies, and relatively high past or present concentrations of private foreign investment are likely to experience strong internal pressures toward maintaining existing inequalities in the distribution of income. The incentives necessary to keep domestic investment capital at home both contribute directly to present inequality and reinforce a class structure resisting future equalizing adjustments in income distribution. Because these structural elements also help stabilize the environment for profitable foreign investment, it will be difficult for rich-country governments to exert effective pressure for structural changes. Thus, it seems unrealistic to expect even the most well-meaning of rich countries to challenge this built-in resistance to basic change. Here is the recalcitrance of dependency at its sharpest.

All of this counsels modest hopes regarding attempts to impose domestic distributional conditions on unreceptive poor countries. At best, the basic needs of the poor majorities inside these countries would be more fully addressed, but domestic income inequalities would not be significantly narrowed. At worst, domestic regimes could undercut attempts to address the majority's basic needs by fiddling with their national budgets.

Yet, neither possibility invalidates the argument for NIEO-type reforms. For one

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thing, some elements of the NIEO program will help to improve the distribution of income inside poor countries almost automatically. Reducing barriers to trade that will increase industrial employment in resource-poor regions will distribute some of the gains from trade to one of the more impoverished segments of the domestic population, the urban unemployed. (This is not to say that wage rates will be fair.) Some other elements of the NIEO program, such as increased aid flows and debt forgiveness, can be regarded as necessary if not sufficient conditions for a more egalitarian distribution of income. More generous aid policies at least make it *possible* for poor countries to pay greater attention to domestic poverty.

A stronger reason for favoring the NIEO proposals becomes clear if we see the proposed reforms as part of a larger picture. If the central thesis of dependency theory is right, a country's participation in the capitalist world economy increases resistance to efforts to attain domestic and global egalitarian goals. The NIEO does little to challenge the constellation of dependency; such a challenge must come, if at all, from within individual poor countries, each following policies appropriate to its own problems and needs. The main organizational problems concerning relations between rich and poor countries, therefore, might be seen as creating an international economic environment in which it will be safe for individual poor countries to undertake progressive domestic reforms without paying unacceptable costs. The range of choices available to poor-country governments must be enlarged; dependent states must be enabled to select development policies with greater autonomy than many now possess.

La Relève

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The NIEO would contribute to such an environment in several ways. Commodity-price stabilization agreements and constitutional changes in multilateral aid agencies would decrease the ability of rich countries and corporate interests to manipulate their relations with the poor for political reasons. Official loan guarantees administered multilaterally would help insulate private and public credit markets from similar political pressures. Even trade liberalization, coupled with preferential tariffs for certain poor-country exports, can be viewed as a framework of options from which poor countries can select advantageous trading arrangements and within which they can increase their bargaining power vis à vis private foreign investors. The NIEO cannot guarantee that poor countries will seek the internal reforms necessary to decrease domestic inequalities; but it can help to ease the way.

There is, however, a less promising aspect to these features of the NIEO proposals. The flexibility that they afford to poor-country governments is double-edged. Because the NIEO is designed to promote growth of manufacturing, it might lead to increasing dependence on foreign goods and capital markets and diminish, rather than enlarge, the range of future options open to poor-country governments. Whether these less desirable possibilities materialize depends, again, on how poor-country governments use the immediate flexibility that the NIEO promises, and on the extent to which extraneous political and economic pressures can be minimized.

These extraneous influences are among the main obstacles to egalitarian reform within poor countries, and they will not be removed by the NIEO proposals. For example, no international economic order could have prevented the CIA or ITT from interfering with the domestic policies of Allende's Chile. But this is clearly not a reason for opposing the NIEO proposals. Instead, it shows one respect in which the NIEO is only part of a larger picture. That picture needs to be filled in by efforts in rich countries, particularly the

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U.S., to subject military and intelligence agencies to greater public scrutiny, and to restrain the political activities of multinational banks and corporations.

The Costs of International Egalitarianism

THE BEST possible outcome of the NIEO reforms would probably make only small contributions to global equality, and even then, to supply only some of the many conditions necessary to improve the prospects of the poorest of the poor. But even such an incremental program will exact significant short-run costs in the rich countries. These costs can be borne without causing anyone serious deprivation, but only if political choices are made to share the costs fairly.

The most obvious costs to the rich would be direct cash transfers. Presumably, the required funds would be raised from personal and business taxes and the question, whether these costs were fairly shared, would be a part of the more general question, whether the tax system itself were fair. In any event relative to other government expenditures, the amounts involved are not inordinately large; for example, if the U.S. were to contribute 1 percent of its GNP as development assistance (more than quadrupling the present level), the annual cost would be less than $20 billion, or about 5 percent of the 1977 federal budget.

Further costs of the NIEO will result from its impact on prices. For example, successful efforts to stabilize commodity prices *above current levels* would have immediate inflationary results that would be difficult politically for rich-country governments to manage. Like the oil price increases of 1973-74, however, these would be one-time shocks, and, like the oil price increases, commodity price increases might be accommodated over time without creating impossible hardships. Again, the main problem would be distributing the inflationary burden fairly inside the rich countries. There is no easy solution, but individual taxpayers might be compensated to some extent by returning to them the windfall profits that would be earned by commodity suppliers in rich countries who stand to benefit from the price-stabilization arrangement.

Finally, and most fundamentally, there are the costs of adjusting to the global shift of employment that would result from more rapid industrialization of the poor countries. The main thrust of the NIEO is to promote this goal; it does so through tariff preferences in the rich countries for poor-country products, increased capital flows, and transfers of manufacturing technology. In the short run, at least, the visible result in the rich countries will be a loss of jobs, as a greater share of the world market is claimed by products of poor countries. Indeed, in the U.S. we have already seen major dislocations in shoes, textiles, clothing, and electronics, stemming in part from the flight of capital to South and Southeast Asia. Here the need for affirmative government action is most pressing, because the required adjustments represent adaptation to permanent changes in the structure of the world economy. Initially, displaced workers will need assistance in retraining and relocating on a far greater scale than at present; in the longer term, one can envision a system of public enterprises cultivating new technologies to soak up the unemployment caused by the flight of industrial capital to the poor countries.

Not all of the poor countries' proposals will be equally costly. One set in particular could be implemented without significant direct costs to the rich—that of the proposals for creating "new wealth" by increasing the flow of international liquidity to poor countries through creation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), and by establishing an international agency to supervise the exploitation of seabed minerals and distribute the profits largely to poor countries. Since these proposals involve wealth to which no one has an existing claim, their adoption would not directly deprive anyone. Thus, their costs must be measured entirely in their indirect effects: relatively insignificant inflation in the case of SDRs, foregone profits for minerals corporations in the case of a seabed regime. Furthermore, such costs would not be borne disproportionately by any individual rich country; in

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the nature of the proposals, the costs would be automatically distributed among most of the rich countries. The failure of many rich countries, including the U.S., to support these proposals is, therefore, especially perverse.

The Prospects

I HAVE ARGUED that the NIEO is incomplete because it does not take seriously enough the need to reduce interpersonal inequality, because it pays insufficient attention to the need to increase agricultural productivity, and because it is insensitive to a variety of political and economic obstacles in rich as well as poor countries. Nevertheless, the NIEO constitutes part of a larger program that would make a modest contribution to the development of the poor countries. More fundamentally, the NIEO would help minimize the risks faced by poor-country regimes that attempt internal reforms aimed at eliminating the causes of inequality. For these reasons the NIEO program survives the objections most often directed at it.

The most pressing dilemmas regarding the wisdom of these proposals lie elsewhere. They involve the internal reforms that *rich* countries must undertake, and the costs they will incur, if the program is to be carried out successfully. Can security agencies and multinational enterprises be opened to public scrutiny, and their foreign political activities effectively be controlled? Can the costs of economic adjustment be shared fairly within and among the rich countries? In particular, can their domestic poor and their workers be insulated from bearing a disproportionate share? Can sufficient public resources be mobilized to finance the long-term structural adjustments that will be required in rich-country economies?

These are the questions that partisans of global egalitarianism must answer. Failure to do so will leave the NIEO proposals stillborn. More serious still are the potential consequences of implementing parts of the NIEO proposals without making the necessary domestic changes in the rich countries. At best, there would follow a political backlash against the global poor that would assure a widening of global inequalities for the rest of the century. At worst, they might lead to greater repression of workers and the poor in the rich countries as global capitalists exploit new opportunities for profit on a world scale.

A complete analysis of the prospects for NIEO would end in an area that may be quite unexpected: in the domestic politics and economic structures of the rich countries. The real dilemma, and the ultimate uncertainty, of global egalitarianism is whether a political coalition can be mobilized within the rich countries for completing the picture of which NIEO is only a partial outline. It is hard to be optimistic about the prospects.[9] □

Notes

[1]See the statistical annexes in John W. Sewell, et al., *The United States and World Development: Agenda 1977* (New York: Praeger, for the Overseas Development Council, 1977).

[2]This is the baldest possible summary of views developed in a very extensive literature on dependency and economic imperialism. For a sophisticated and comprehensive recent statement, see Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

[3]For an argument to this effect, see Michael Walzer, "In Defense of Equality," *Dissent,* Fall 1973, pp. 399-408.

[4]See my more extensive argument for this position in "Justice and International Relations," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Summer 1975, pp. 360-89.

[5]Robert W. Tucker, *The Inequality of Nations* (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 153. Tucker's remarks appeared earlier, in somewhat different form, in "Egalitarianism and International Politics," *Commentary,* September 1975, pp. 27-40.

[6]Tucker, *The Inequality of Nations,* pp. 62-65.

[7]For a useful, brief summary of the NIEO program, see Karl P. Sauvant, "The Poor Countries and the Rich—a Few Steps Forward," *Dissent,* Winter 1978, pp. 44-46.

[8]As Sauvant argues in the article cited above.

[9]I would like to thank Douglas Bennett for advice and suggestions on the political economy of the NIEO proposals. □

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Rick Tilman

Ideology and Utopia in Milton Friedman

The economist Milton Friedman, best known as the leading American proponent of laissez faire economics, has been a central figure in the recent upsurge of conservative thought. I propose here to criticize the political theory he sets forth in his most widely read book, *Capitalism and Freedom*, and will seek:

(1) to establish how improbable is the realization of his wish to end interest-group politics, while explaining why his ideal political economy is most unlikely in any advanced industrial state—which makes him, in the undesirable sense, a utopian theorist; (2) to show that his ideal political economy and many of his policy prescriptions would either centralize power or atomize the public, thus undermining his claim to favor genuine decentralization; (3) to contend that there is little historical or empirical evidence for the claim that political freedom is dependent on market freedom in Western representative political systems with mixed economies; (4) to demonstrate that much of Friedman's work represents a condition of ideological and political closure; (5) to show that it contains inconsistently applied value criteria.

Friedman traces his intellectual pedigree to the classical and neoclassical traditions of economic thought. He has been a leader in the "neoclassical revival," which includes many intellectual colleagues such as George Stigler, Friedrich von Hayek, Jacob Viner, Henry Simons, Frank Knight, and Ludwig von Mises. What Friedman and his fellow neoclassicists share is an ideology consisting of:

(1) a commitment to a free, competitive, self-adjusting market mechanism, which means eliminating most of the changes made in American society since 1933 as a result of government intervention; (2) the notion of "economic man," endowed with a hedonistic psyche that makes him a "lightning calculator" of pleasure and pain and a rational maximizer of self-interest; (3) a belief that in a perfectly fluid, frictionless, competitive market economy the pursuit of individual self-interest would result in maximizing economic benefits to all in "invisible hand" fashion; (4) a conviction that the American economy is still close enough to the competitive model to assume the continued relevance of that model in spite of statist aberrations; (5) an assumption that economic knowledge is so imperfect that it is dangerous for government to intervene in the marketplace, since the results of intervention will often be different from those predicted; (6) a belief that market freedom is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for political freedom and that most types of government intervention in the marketplace will erode political liberty; (7) an insistence that men should receive economic rewards on the basis of property ownership and work performed, rather than in accord with the ethic that would bestow reward on the basis of work or need.

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The End of Politics and the Achievement of Utopia

FRIEDMAN CALLS, in effect, for an *end to politics* as presently known, through drastic curtailment of political activity in the executive, regulatory, and legislative areas. He wants a massive reduction of the public sector and an equally massive increase of the private sector to achieve a "social balance" diametrically opposed to that suggested by Galbraith in *The Affluent Society*. This prescription is predicated on his view concerning the "threat" that pressure groups pose to representative government:

> The only way that I can see to offset special producer groups is to establish a general presumption against the state undertaking certain kinds of activities. Only if there is a general recognition that governmental activities should be severely limited with respect to a class of cases can the burden of proof be put strongly enough on those who would depart from this general presumption to give a reasonable hope of limiting the spread of measures to further special interests.[1]

In Friedman's ideal society, interest groups would not be successful even if they attempted to gain concessions through political action. Now, the factors, besides interest-group activity, which cause government intervention into economic life, are well known. They include the ideological residues of welfare-state collectivism, the power of neocollectivist politicians, entrenched bureaucracy, and the unhindered market mechanism. Intervention is due not only to the legacy of the New Deal but to concentration of power and wealth, and to the resulting values and organization, fostered in the private sector of the economy by the market mechanism.

Unfortunately, Friedman ignores the unhindered market itself as an important factor in producing the "predatory" interest-group activity, which he deplores. As Galbraith argued in *American Capitalism*, those groups and classes that must sell their labor, crops, or goods while lacking market power are likely to demand governmental intervention in order to improve their position in the market. Should we expect those newly emerging groups to exercise a vast restraint, when much of the ideology that accompanies market mechanisms in our social system enthrones and glorifies self-interest? There is something utopian to the idea that strong interest groups can be permitted to form as a consequence of socioeconomic processes rooted in the market and then be prevented from having their demands met once they enter the political sphere.

Market processes themselves are the origin of most of the political forces that produce intervention. And so too is the ideological legitimation of interest-group demands. Once interest groups obtain the necessary resources and legitimacy from their position in the market, they are likely to achieve adoption of the policy measures they favor. Perhaps in a system with political parties organized along ideological lines, interest-group demands could be successfully resisted; but that would necessitate structural changes in the market to deprive strong interest groups of their economic resources and ideological legitimacy. In short, it would involve the creation of an egalitarian-collectivist society that is the opposite of Friedman's utopian vision of capitalism.

Friedman argues that most of the regulatory and welfare-state measures passed since 1933 fail to accomplish what they were intended to do; they unduly restrict human freedom, and should, therefore, be abandoned. The reality is, however, that pressure-group politics are not about to cease; indeed, short of dictatorship they cannot be stopped. New pressure groups are constantly being formed to get government at all levels to intervene in the economy. Substantial segments of the American public are committed to modifying the political and social fabric. Newly politicized low-income groups, especially racial and ethnic minorities, keep urging government to act in their behalf. What this amounts to is not the end of

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pressure-group politics but the expansion of the whole process on a broader scale than before. Friedman may be correct in his belief that pressure groups often behave in an irresponsible manner; but he ignores the fact that the main source of the power and wealth of high-status groups is not the state apparatus (although that may serve to reinforce it) but the basic system of property-relations and the market mechanism, neither of which he proposes to change in any fundamental way.

If it is the free market itself that is mainly responsible for pressure-group politics, fundamental structural changes in that market might rid society of much of the interventionism that the market fosters. But this solution would hardly be acceptable to Friedman, who is convinced that the free market is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for political freedom. To change the market mechanism in any way except toward more freedom from governmental control would, in his opinion, jeopardize political freedom. Yet more freedom in the market would in all probability produce more of just the "predatory" pressure-group politics he deplores. Friedman is thus caught in a situation in which he cannot attain his ideal political economy (a system in which pressure-group politics disappears) without endangering the free market he believes necessary to a free polity. He wants to expand the free market on a large scale; yet he does not want the political consequences of market freedom, one of which is the fostering of pressure-group activity. Though he does not recognize it, much less deal with it, this is the trap in which Friedman finds himself.

It can be argued, of course, that the elimination of the free market, or its drastic restriction, would not destroy "predatory" interest groups or even reduce their effectiveness. Even in a managed political economy, groups would still strive for gain and advantage through political action. In the present system, however, the market mechanism and its subprocesses are a significant source not only of the values but also of the institutional potency whose outlet is government interference with the market. Short of a collectivist utopia that institutionalizes the Golden Rule, interest-group politics are here to stay.

It is probable that externalities (situations with divergences between individual and social costs or benefits) and collective goods are becoming relatively more important in developed societies. As population expands and economic growth occurs, the problems of pollution and congestion will increase, particularly in the absence of any government action. Education and research are also becoming more important, and these activities seem especially conducive to externalities. To the degree that externalities and collective goods are in fact becoming more important, the emasculation of government that Friedman wants becomes still more dubious. There is no more compelling example of his utopianism than his notion that a near abolition of the public sector can occur without sacrificing social objectives important to most Americans.

A Centralizing Critic of Collectivism?

FRIEDMAN'S CENTRALIZING BIAS shows itself in his attitude toward (1) tendencies inherent in market processes and the legal framework essential to the existence of the market, (2) the present system of labor-management relations and its alternatives, (3) corporate concentration and price administration.

Decentralization is usually assumed to mean two things. First, increasing the number of centers of decision-making. Second, increasing the number of initiators of policy. Centralization, its opposite, thus means decreasing the number of centers of decision-making and reducing the number of initiators of policy. Now, many of Friedman's policy prescriptions would reduce the number of centers of decision-making by abolishing political or bureaucratic agencies. But this in turn would increase the number of initiators of policy; only they would consist of powerless individuals who could not act

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collectively to change the system. An atomized public-at-large would face the superior power of economic elites in an open market. Friedman thus confuses the absence of government intervention in the economy with genuine decentralization, in part because he has an inadequate understanding of what decentralization implies.

Robert Seidman has analyzed the power inequalities inherent in the market and the legal framework within which it functions—inequalities ignored by Friedman. The free market and the legal framework that supports it permit parties in an interaction to determine their own norms of conduct and ensure that the stronger party will impose its desires upon the weaker, since the market does not protect against the imposition of private power. The state, by enforcing private agreements, employs its monopoly of coercion to enforce the norms agreed upon by the parties to the exchange. Since all decision-making is value-laden, the state cannot be a value-neutral arbiter in presiding over a market economy. The enforcement of private bargains is therefore as much a form of state intervention as are more direct commands from the state to citizens; and in such bargains the state delegates its power to the more powerful party in the exchange. A net result is to endow the economically stronger classes with the most significant powers of the state, "all under the fictional disguise of equality and freedom."[2] This analysis undermines Friedman's claim that the market disperses and fragments power; but, then, Friedman is only concerned with getting the government out of the market, not with genuine decentralization.

To Friedman "economic freedom" means the ability to participate in making economic arrangements that are both private (free from government control) and voluntary (free from interference by other individuals). He claims that the market alone can coordinate human activities without coercion. Friedman ignores the fact, however, that the separation of labor from capital compels those who do not own capital to sell their labor to some purchaser, while the owner of capital can abstain from selling his labor temporarily or permanently, depending on the nature and quantity of capital he owns. Society can thus be divided at some point between owners of capital who are relatively free from the coercion of the market and the rest who have no choice but to sell their labor to a purchaser. Thus Friedman has not only failed to demonstrate that the market can coordinate large-scale human activities without coercion; he also remains oblivious to the centralizing tendencies inherent in free-market processes, which vest superior power in the owners of capital by virtue of their position in the market.

Friedman's centralism derives partly from his near absolutist view of property rights. He generally objects to government controls on property because they diminish the freedom of the owner to do what he wants with his property. He rejects any role for employees in corporate decision-making by refusing even to consider the possibility of a power structure that is not elitist and authoritarian. His view here follows logically from the assumption that corporate management and stockholders fulfill their obligations to society solely by maximizing profit. Friedman does not even consider the possibility of union participation in the corporate decision-making process.

Friedman's attitude precludes a bill of rights that would give labor meaningful participation in corporate policy-making. It also inhibits the development of any kind of industrial democracy that might be implemented by government intervention. His rigid view of property rights permits managerial creeds such as "scientific management" or the "human relations" approach, as long as these are implemented by the corporation itself and do not interfere with maximum profit. Not surprisingly, he has nothing to say about the authoritarian power relations that prevail in much of American industry, except, implicitly, to justify it. Apparently "libertarianism" and the centralization of power in labor-management relations are for him quite compatible.

Friedman opposes government ownership or regulation of industry except where monopoly or other imperfections in the

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market mechanism exist, and where circumstances indicate a divergence between social and private costs or benefits. Even then, Friedman holds that government intervention is seldom justified. Abhorring intervention and claiming to be opposed to large power concentrates, he should presumably support a massive strengthening of the antitrust laws if corporate economic power is to be dispersed. Even though such support would add weight to Friedman's philosophy and weaken the charge of centralism brought against him, he does not embrace any programs calling for fundamental change in the antitrust laws as they apply to corporations; nor is he very concerned with the existing degree of industrial concentration except where government policy has caused it.[3] The classical liberal case for laissez-faire was that vigorous competition among a large number of producers would protect the consumer from the degree of power that producers might otherwise acquire. But Friedman, in the context of modern large-scale oligopoly, advocates laissez-faire with little visible concern for vigorous competition. Nor does he advocate any basic changes in antitrust law. In fact, he argues that the degree of existing monopoly is much less than commonly believed, except where state intervention has fostered it.[4] Friedman blithely ignores the fundamental dualism of American capitalism whereby the economy is divided between large, powerful oligopolistic firms, and small firms, unorganized workers, and consumers. He writes as though there were no qualitative difference between the market situation of large manufacturers and that of the more purely competitive areas.

What kind of society would we have if we adopted Friedman's proposals? Probably a society dominated by corporate elites and other large property owners, similar in many ways to the one we had before 1933. The analogy is rough since even then the government performed certain functions that Friedman opposes. Nevertheless, his ideal political economy more closely resembles the old system than it does any that now exists. Public-sector spending would be drastically reduced. Political elites would have much scantier resources to allocate, and the unhindered market mechanism would be used as the basic institution for allocating values. But unless this generated rapid growth in the labor movement or the government used antitrust policy to break up concentrated industries so that a more competitive and sensitive price mechanism could function, what restraints would exist to check corporate economic power? Friedman's answer is that corporations do not have any objectionable degree of power, except that which they receive from government intervention. As he sees it, economic power is largely dispersed in an impersonal market mechanism over which no one economic unit can exercise much influence; it responds more or less automatically to the law of supply and demand except when price-fixers, labor unions, or the government interfere, usually the latter two. There is no "problem" of economic power except that created when political power causes intervention in the market.

Is this a realistic portrayal of the corporate role in the economy? There is insufficient space here to examine the evidence on oligopoly and monopolistic competition even though it makes Friedman's view seem dubious at best.

Friedman is fond of posing as the champion of individualism and decentralization. It should be apparent, however, that his is not a call for a radically decentralized society.[5] What it represents is a plea for the creation of a society where politicians leave the unhindered market process to the domination of those who occupy superior market positions. It is a call for what Christian Bay has referred to as "the constitution of perpetual privilege."[6]

The Relation Between Political and Market Freedom

FRIEDMAN OFFERS insufficient evidence to prove that "market freedom" is a necessary

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condition for political freedom. There is little evidence of a causal relation between a "free market" and political freedom in systems like our own.[7] He believes that an unobstructed market will reduce concentrations of power by restoring competition. Contemporary pluralists hope to control excessive concentrations of power by various processes, including multiple memberships in groups causing offsetting pressures, the exercise of countervailing power, and the passage of more and different welfare and regulatory legislation. Radical critics of pluralism often argue for the elimination of both the market mechanism and the large concentrations of private property in order to disperse and fragment power. Still another category of thought is that of "market socialism" combining socialized ownership of large business organizations with extensive use of market mechanisms, under government regulation. The Yugoslav regime has moved somewhat in this direction, but the spectrum of possibilities is a wide one that includes far more liberalized variants. It is significant that this whole category of thought is largely absent from Friedman's writings.

His thesis of the relation between market and political freedom would be easier to analyze if it took a form more clearly susceptible to proof or disproof. Assar Lindbeck writes cogently on this theme:

> It is absurd to argue that there are no relations between economic and political structures. My main point about the limited correlations between economic and political conditions is that the relationships are so complicated that simple generalizations—whether by Hayek or the Marxists—are not convincing. This statement is, of course, not an attempt to minimize the risk of a substantial concentration of power and of a limitation on personal freedom in a society based mainly on public ownership. I think, however, that the more universal risks are bureaucratization, a lack of decentralization of initiative, and a propensity to abstain from criticism of highly placed public officials (for career reasons), rather than dictatorship (in the fascist or communist sense).[8]

Most of the mixed economies in the Atlantic Community have public sectors that consume from 25 to 45 percent of the gross national product. Sweden and Great Britain rank near the upper end, Italy and the United States much further down the scale. If Friedman's analysis is valid, countries with the largest public sector and the most government regulation should have less political freedom than those with a smaller amount of government intervention. They should reveal a secular trend toward authoritarian government.

But is it true that Sweden and Great Britain have less political freedom than the United States? Does, indeed, the size of the public sector, in and of itself, have any necessary bearing at all on the degree of political freedom? Is there any empirical study that would support this view? Apparently Friedman expects his critics to accept his unsubstantiated charge that incremental changes in the degree of government intervention in the market will lead to political dictatorship. Congressmen about to amend the Social Security and Fair Labor Standard acts in order to broaden coverage should than be terrified at the prospect of the "new Leviathan" they are helping to create! Some, apparently, have been.

I have argued that there is no demonstrated causal relation between Friedman's "market freedom" and political freedom. It appears, instead, that within as yet undetermined limits there are many market structures quite compatible with political freedom. In fact, there is a more probable, though tenuous, relation between the *level* of social and economic development and the political system than between the market mechanism and the political apparatus. There are no empirical studies, however, that would either verify or refute this hypothesis on a sufficiently broad scale. Friedman has offered no empirical data to support his case nor does he cite the work of anyone who has. If anything, he has ignored a large body of literature in the social sciences that suggests he has examined too limited an area for evidence of causal

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relations between the political and economic realms.

The welfare and regulatory apparatus that Friedman sees threatening freedom has been with us for some time now. In Great Britain much of it has existed since before World War I, created by the last Liberal government. In the United States we have had a large public sector since the time of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Experiments with indicative planning have gone on in Japan, Norway, and France for many years. If Friedman's theory is correct, there should be strong indications of the erosion of political freedom in those countries with parliamentary systems and mixed economies. After many years of large-scale public-sector expansion, dictatorship should long since have become the order of the day if there is any validity to the "road-to-serfdom" thesis.

We may conclude, than, that Friedman's analysis of the relation between political and market freedom (1) is so imprecise as to make it doubtful whether his thesis can be proved or disproved empirically and, (2), even if accepted as verifiable in principle, is nevertheless unsubstantiated either historically or empirically.

A Case of Political and Ideological Closure

FRIEDMAN'S INTERPRETATION of the political economy of "libertarian" neoclassicism and his application of it to the American scene is an example of political and ideological closure. It requires an immobilized polity, which cannot direct the development of society in any significant way once pressure groups and other sources of market intervention are prevented from obtaining government aid. It is a politically static utopia, freezing power relations and structures. Entry into the political arena would still be possible for new groups, but society could not be shaped to meet their needs through government action. They would have to accept whatever the market offered them. And those most able to exert economic pressure would surely play the dominant role. This would mean not only that one individual or group could not legally bring any other than economic pressure to bear upon another individual or group but also that economic pressure could not be barred or its exercise restricted in any significant way. New interests and classes would have to deal with entrenched interests and classes on the latter's own terms.

Is it not likely that shifting power relations within a static political system unable to adjust to change would produce large-scale discontent and disorder? Increasingly, status and class conditions have been withdrawn from the pressures of the free market and were subject to political control. Consequently, government management of the class structure has become an important, if inadequate, way of reducing inequality and the insecurity of low-income groups. In Friedman's utopia, government would have to abandon most such attempts to regulate the distribution of scarce social values.[9] We could thus look forward with confidence to the resurgence of a politics of violence and to social instability.

The closure implicit in the conservative libertarian position is further manifest in the assumption that self-correcting market forces will always maintain the equilibrium of the economic system and that optimal efficiency of the microeconomic unit will lead automatically to optimal efficiency of the total economic system. In this theory there can be no important conflict between private and social efficiency, because little account is taken of the importance of diseconomies in the form of unpaid social costs and unrealized social values. It is no accident that Friedman has little or nothing to say about the problems of pollution and environmental control in his *Newsweek* column.

Closure is again implied in assigning to the market mechanism alone ethical legitimacy for the determination of national priorities. This is a repugnance to segments of the population that have grown rapidly in recent years and are not willing to see values, power, and status allocated almost entirely through an unrestricted market in which they are necessarily among the weaker elements.

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An Inconsistently Applied Value Criterion

FOR THE LIBERTARIAN conservative who subscribes only to utilitarian values, there are no standards by which to evaluate ways of allocating economic resources except that of absolute consumer sovereignty in the free market. Changing the pattern of resource allocation through government controls is neither legitimate nor socially wise, for it deprives the consumer of the freedom of choice so high in Friedman's hierarchy of values. Friedman goes to great lengths to define "economic freedom" and to base policy prescriptions on it in such a way as to extend consumer and seller sovereignty to its outermost limits:

> I asked Professor Friedman, "Is it your position that, assuming the community decided to license the whores, it would be wrong to insist that they check in at regular intervals for health certificates?" Yes, he thought that would be wrong—"After all, if the customer contracts a venereal disease, the prostitute having warranted that she was clean, he has available a tort action against her."[10]

In the words of C. B. Macpherson describing the value system of the libertarians of the right:

> They concern themselves only with the scale of values that is actually registered in the market. The individual utilities on which their system is based are given by the preferences and tastes of individuals as they are. In maximizing utility or welfare, all wants are equal. Whatever is, is right."[11]

Friedman is seriously inconsistent here: he demands moral agnosticism yet issues sweeping condemnations of collectivist policy in emotive language. But if no value preferences are really superior to any other, how does one explain Friedman's moral indignation at government restrictions on "economic freedom"? How does one justify his condemnation of Communist systems? It is obvious that Friedman believes that unrestricted capitalism has an ethical validity denied to all other political economies. But surely his readers deserve a more consistent explanation as to why the basic institutional apparatus of unlimited capitalism is supposed to be morally superior to all other existing systems.[12] □

Notes

I want to thank Peter Fliess, editor of *Polity,* for permission to reprint this article.—R.T.

[1] Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 144.

[2] Robert Seidman, "Contract Law, the Free Market, and State Intervention: A Jurisprudential Perspective," *Journal of Economic Issues*, 7 (December 1973), pp. 556, 559.

[3] In recent years, economists have expressed considerable concern over the strengthening of monopolistic tendencies in the American economy due to the rapid growth of conglomerates, which has removed large corporations even further from the control of market forces since, when a firm operates in many different product markets, it is less subject to the competitive discipline of any one market. How has Friedman reacted to all of this? In the midst of this wave of conglomerate mergers, he tells us "the problem of monopoly, as a matter of policy, is largely a problem not of getting government to enact and enforce legislation against monopoly but of keeping government from enacting and enforcing legislation strengthening and preserving monopoly." Friedman, *An Economist's Protest* (Glen Ridge, New Jersey: Thomas Horton and Company, 1972), p. 197.

[4] Friedman thinks that 75 to 85 percent of the private sector is competitive. *Capitalism and Freedom*, pp. 121-22. But if the administered price thesis is true, as assumed here, then the corporate role in the American economy is fundamentally different from Friedman's view of it; different in the sense that an industrial elite exists whose power is not dispersed and fragmented by an impersonal market mechanism that responds mechanically to the forces of supply and demand. An elite, vested with great economic power, must therefore exist unless it can be demonstrated that its power is offset or controlled by other social or political institutions. Friedman does not acknowledge countervailing power by other social organisms outside the corporate-union complex, nor does he support their creation to check the power of the corporate elite. It must be concluded that he is a proponent of centralization, since he defends the present pricing power of the corporate elite and does not advocate either a different price system or the implementation of controls or restraints on the present one. This

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assertion can be made without even considering other powers that corporate elites possess, such as control over labor force, location of new plants, choice of which products to develop, etc. Two of the latest refutations of the Chicago School on the administered price thesis are by Gardner Means, "The Administered-Price Thesis Reconfirmed," *American Economic Review*, 62 (June 1972), pp. 292-306; and Milton Moore, "Stigler on Inflexible Prices," *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 5 (November 1972), pp. 486-93.

[5]As Christian Bay puts it, "A gradual abolition of government would immediately increase the leeway for private power hierarchies. And this means, be it noted, an increase primarily in institutionally irresponsible power, at the expense of a power hierarchy that can be made subject to some measure of control from below, by way of elections and parliaments." *The Structure of Freedom* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), pp. 35-36.

[6]Bay, "Hayek's Liberalism: The Constitution of Perpetual Privilege," *Political Science Reviewer*, 1 (Fall 1971), pp. 93-124.

[7]It is impossible to be more precise about his view of the relation between political freedom and capitalism, since he does not indicate how large the public sector of the economy would have to become in order to destroy or jeopardize political freedom.

[8]Lindbeck, *The Political Economy of the New Left: An Outsider's View* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 65-66.

[9]It may be objected that Friedman is a supporter of the negative income tax which is a form of government management of the class structure. His support, however, is based on his belief that it is an expedient alternative to the present welfare system—one that uses the market mechanism rather than bureaucratic intervention. In a recent interview he was skeptical about the need for *any* government income maintenance in a libertarian society, apparently because he believes that the distribution of output in a frictionless economy is "just." A distinction must be made between his concessions to political reality in a welfare state and his essentially utopian commitment to an ideal political economy based on laissez-faire. See "Playboy Interview: Milton Friedman," *Playboy*, February 1973, p. 64.

[10]Margot Hentoff, "Unbuckled," *New York Review of Books*, December 3, 1970, pp. 19-20.

[11]C. B. Macpherson, "Post-Liberal Democracy," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 30 (November 1964), p. 492.

[12]Friedman claims that the price system provides an instrument through the subtle operation of which every man can have his say. Real worth is whatever persons find "utilitous." The concept of utility is the orthodox referent for value, and price is its measure. It is, however, an unwarranted inference to presume an equality between "real worth" and the prices people pay for commodities. Thus utility-value theory, in the form that is utilized by Friedman, is not only inconsistently applied but is a source of confusion. See Clarence Ayres, *The Industrial Economy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), p. 335. □

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Bukharin-Kamenev Meeting, 1928

The document entitled here "Bukharin-Kamenev Meeting, July 1928" is translated by George Saunders. Although the document is cited by virtually all Western historians of the period, this is the first full translation into English, and possibly into any language.

The Russian original is preserved in the Trotsky archives at Harvard University Library in the form of a five-page, single-spaced typescript of Kamenev's elliptical notes. The translator has tried to reproduce Kamenev's choppy, abbreviated style to preserve the drama of that historical moment. At the same time, some minimal concessions have been made to make the text comprehensible to the reader. Abbreviations have been spelled out and some material has been inserted in brackets. (All parentheses were in the original.) Headings, based on those of Kamenev, have been given to the five main sections. Part III is preceded in the original by the words "What is underlined is verbatim" and "Copy of a copy." These comments and the underlining (or rendering in italics) have been omitted. Finally, paragraphing and quotation marks have been made somewhat more consistent, but with no effort to alter the document's often slovenly and repetitive character.

The introductory essay, "Premonitions of Stalinism," *and annotations are by Stephen F. Cohen.*

—G.S. and S.F.C.

Stephen F. Cohen

Premonitions of Stalinism

Various euphemisms have attached to the events in the Soviet Union that began in early 1928 and culminated in the frenzy of Stalin's revolution from above at the end of 1929. Some of these characterizations are scholarly; others, frankly political. All obscure the real significance of 1928-29 as a turning point in modern history, and the difficulty of explaining it.

Western historians sometimes speak, for example, of 1928-29 as the onset of "full-blown totalitarianism," suggesting a continuous, ineluctable, and thus easily understood outcome. Recent scholarship points, however, to the presence of alternatives. Soviet and Western writers alike speak of a first "five-year plan" in the economy, implying a high level of calculation. But there was no real plan, even in industry, only pell-mell heavy industrialization through wildly escalated targets, menacing exhortations, recurrent crises, makeshift measures, and wasteful imbalances. Nor does the term collectivization, with its overtones of rationality, evoke the needless tragedy of the Soviet countryside in 1929-33—a virtual civil war between the state and the peasantry that left millions dead and agriculture wrecked. And despite irrefutable documentation about subsequent decades of official abuses and privilege, there are those who still speak of 1928-29 as the "beginning of socialism" in the Soviet Union.

The real significance of 1928-29 was the coming of Stalinism—the first appearance of specific policies, political practices, and

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ideological propositions that were to be characteristics of the Stalinist system for the next 25 years. It was the beginning of this farrago of mountainous achievements and monstrous crimes that created the Soviet Union we know today and transformed the nature of world politics. The direct consequences and enduring legacy of Stalinism, inside and outside the Soviet Union, rank it among the major political phenomena of the 20th century, and 1928-29 as a seminal turning point. If historians have been slow to recognize this fact, and to treat it as a major problem of historical explanation, ordinary Soviet citizens have known it all along. They still live daily with what was wrought, and lost, in 1928-29.

THE POLITICAL DECISIONS leading to this turning point were accompanied by the last, and most fateful, of the factional struggles inside the Soviet Communist party after Lenin's death in 1924.* Though the disputes of 1928-29 encompassed the whole of public affairs, from the party-state's relations with all segments of Soviet society to the direction of the Comintern (Communist International) and foreign policy, economic policy was the heart of the controversy. For the Bolsheviks, economics was still the main determinant of their revolution.

Previous intraparty struggles, which ended in the defeat of left oppositions led by Lev Trotsky in 1923-24, Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev in 1925, and by all three in 1926-27, had not significantly affected the population. Despite a superficial resemblance to those of the left, Stalin's increasingly extremist policies in agriculture and industry in 1928-29 were, however, profoundly new, and they quickly ramified from the center to the smallest village. They were bitterly opposed by three senior Politburo members, who until then had been his allies: Nikolai Bukharin, the theorist of Bolshevism, head of the Comintern, and co-leader of the party with Stalin since 1925; Aleksei Rykov, Lenin's successor as Soviet Premier; and Mikhail Tomsky, chief of the Soviet trade unions.

This Bukharinist group, or right opposition as it became known, insisted that Stalin's policies were politically dangerous, economically disastrous, and, in their fundamental coercive aspects, incompatible with socialism. Industrialization and collectivization were also primary goals for the Bukharinists. But their own ambitious proposals were based on a continuation of NEP (the New Economic Policy introduced in 1921), on its dual public-private economy with market relations between state industry and peasant farming, and on its political and economic principles of civil peace, moderation, gradualism, and balanced development. In all these respects, Bukharinism and nascent Stalinism were antithetical.

When the struggle began in early 1928, over Stalin's forcible ("extraordinary") measures in grain collection, the Bukharin group had significant advantages. Its leaders commanded important offices of power and were of greater personal stature than those of the Stalinist faction, which, apart from Stalin, general secretary of the party, relied upon such secondary figures as Kliment Voroshilov, Anastas Mikoyan, Vyacheslav Molotov, and Lazar Kaganovich, whose authority, and notoriety, came later. Bukharinist policies enjoyed widespread sympathy throughout lower party ranks, the state apparatus, and, it would seem, most segments of society. In addition, they had been ratified officially, and repeatedly, as the only correct policies by the defeats of the left. Sitting as late as December 1927, the Fifteenth Party Congress had at once expelled the left from the party and legislated Bukharin's policies as guidelines for a first five-year plan in industry and agriculture.

Nonetheless, by April 1929, Stalin had defeated the Bukharinist opposition overwhelmingly, and made his new policies official, inside the Politburo and the Central Committee. Stalin's victory derived from

* For a full account of the struggle, and documentation, see my *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography, 1888-1938* (New York: Knopf, 1973 and 1975).

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several factors, including his organizational power as general secretary and the fact that many high party officials did not yet perceive the ultimate direction of his extremism. They still saw Stalin in his earlier role as a man of the cautious center.

But the defeat of Bukharin and his allies was due also to their refusal to carry the struggle beyond these high councils, where Stalin's power was greatest, to the larger arenas of their own support. They refused partly because they themselves had helped to traduce, and finally expel, the left for these same acts of public "factionalism" and "splitting." Having created a narrow covert politics at the top, they were trapped where Stalin excelled. And there, as even disgruntled Stalinists later complained, they were defeated "not with argument but with party cards," and "strangled behind the back of the party."

The defeat of the Bukharinist opposition had far-reaching consequences. Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky were soon ousted from the Politburo, and their followers everywhere hounded from office. (All three later perished in Stalin's great purges, Tomsky a suicide in 1936, and Bukharin and Rykov by execution after the Moscow Trial of 1938.) Of Lenin's successors, Stalin alone remained, now an unrivaled leader and shortly to become a despot. Inseparably, an ideological terror was unleashed in 1929 against all Bukharinist and NEP policies as "rotten liberalism." Fifty years later, these programmatic ideas remain officially proscribed in the Soviet Union. Finally, Bukharin's defeat was prelude to revolution from above, the opening chapter of Stalinism. By December 1929, unrestrained by effective opposition, Stalin's "extraordinary measures" in the countryside led to the act from which so much else was to follow—forcible collectivization of 125 million peasants and all-out war on any who resisted.

THE IMPORTANT DOCUMENT printed below provides a unique inside view of this fateful struggle. It is an account of a secret meeting between Bukharin and Kamenev on July 11, 1928. Written hastily by Kamenev as a report to Zinoviev on what Bukharin had said, it also includes commentary by Grigory Sokolnikov, an anti-Stalinist member of the Central Committee who participated in part of the conversation.

Bukharin had arranged the secret meeting through Sokolnikov to solicit the support of Kamenev and Zinoviev (both having just been readmitted to the party) against Stalin. He came directly from an ongoing plenum of the full Central Committee. It was a crucial moment. The policy resolutions of the Central Committee were still strongly Bukharinist. But at closed sessions Bukharin had discovered the full programmatic nature of Stalin's "extraordinary measures" of grain collection, the defection of leaders on whom he had counted, and the reluctance of uncommitted Central Committee members to move against the general secretary. Also on his mind was the Sixth Comintern Congress, scheduled to open in Moscow on July 17. Stalin had already begun to move privately against Bukharin's control and united-front policies, and toward the extreme anti-Social Democratic course that from 1929 did so much to undercut resistance to fascism in Europe.

The document should not be read as a verbatim report of the meeting. Only one section claims to be a literal account of what Bukharin said, but even this is clearly elliptical. Bukharin and his followers later protested that the document gave a one-sided picture of the meeting, and this, too, seems clear. Moreover, Kamenev's often unflattering commentary on Bukharin's behavior should be read in the context of their own recently concluded struggle that had disgraced and driven Kamenev and Zinoviev from power.

There is, however, no doubt about the document's authenticity, which was confirmed by several sources, including Bukharin himself.* Indeed, it came to play a role in the struggle between Bukharin and Stalin. Later in July, a copy of Kamenev's report to

* For the authenticity and history of the document, see Angelo Tasca's account in Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, *Annali,* Anno Ottavo (Milan, 1966), pp. 889,

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Zinoviev was acquired by Moscow Trotskyists, and by early fall a copy had reached Trotsky in his distant exile in Kazakhstan. On January 20, 1929, apparently at Trotsky's urging and to the great resentment of Bukharin and his friends, Trotskyists in Moscow published the document as an underground (or *samizdat*) pamphlet.

The version circulated widely and quickly came into the hands of Stalin, who seized upon it as the occasion for a major showdown with the Bukharinists. At an expanded session of the Politburo, sitting intermittently between January 30 and February 9, the warring factions exchanged bitter recriminations. Much of Stalin's attack was based on the July meeting with Kamenev as evidence of Bukharin's betrayal of party discipline and attempted alliance with discredited oppositionists. From this reasonably factual, though partisan, interpretation, the document, henceforth suppressed, passed into the obscene mythology of Stalinist politics. It was cited at Bukharin's trial in 1938 as early proof of the criminal conspiracy of the "anti-Soviet bloc of rightists and Trotskyites."

In the context above, the document speaks for itself. It is a major source of our knowledge about 1928-29. Among other things, it documents the intense opposition of the Bukharin group and its support even at the highest levels—from the Moscow party organization headed by Nikolai Uglanov, the secret police (GPU, or OGPU, as it was then known), whose deputy chiefs Genrikh Yagoda and Mikhail Trilisser sympathized with the Bukharinists, to Stalin's supposed bailiwick, the Organizational Bureau (Orgburo) of the Central Committee. In this respect, the document refutes the notion that Stalin's victory was effortless and his revolution from above virtually predetermined.

Above all, the document illuminates Bukharin's own role at this momentous juncture in Soviet history. His weaknesses as political leader of the opposition are evident—his Hamlet-like indecision and wavering, his alternate flights of despair and false optimism, his self-defeating tactics, and his deference to ritualistic antifactionalism. And yet, it is hard to conclude that another political personality would have changed the outcome. Every other Bolshevik oppositionist had likewise been crushed by Stalin, while displaying almost identical failings at one critical moment or another.

More admirable, and perhaps most important in historical perspective, was the quality of Bukharin's ideological opposition to nascent Stalinism, even in defeat. Better than any other major Bolshevik, indeed almost alone among them, he understood what was truly involved in 1928-29: "The fate of the revolution is at stake." While Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev interpreted Stalin's draconian policies as merely bureaucratic maneuvers, and contemplated an alliance with him against the right, Bukharin saw immediately that Stalin's new course transcended old disputes and was, he believed, "disastrous for the revolution as a whole."

Elsewhere, Bukharin characterized Stalin's policies in the countryside as "military-feudal exploitation of the peasantry." Here, speaking to Kamenev, he warned, with remarkable prevision, "Stalin's policy is leading to civil war. He will have to drown the revolts in blood." And in Stalin's murderous theory (put forth to justify the civil strife) that as socialism draws closer, class struggle must grow stronger, Bukharin saw, rightly, an ideology of permanent terror: "The result of this will be a police state."

Finally, Bukharin realized the mistake of the original Bolshevik leaders, himself included, once Lenin's successors and now pilloried outcasts. For years they had been divided among themselves over real issues, but while shunning equally real possibilities of compromise. Meanwhile, and as a result, Stalin has gained the power to become a "Genghis Khan," to "cut our throats," and to launch a course none of them, left or right, had ever desired. Bukharin stated it simply to

893-94, 897-98; Stalin's remarks at the expanded Politburo session of January 30-February 9, 1929, in J. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. XI (Moscow, 1954), pp. 332-40; the resolution in *KPSS v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh*, Vol. II (Moscow, 1954), pp. 556-67; and "Within the Right-Centrist Bloc," in *Writings of Leon Trotsky [1929]* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975), pp. 67-73.

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Kamenev who, along with Trotsky, remained unmoved: "The differences between us and Stalin are many times more serious than all the differences we had with you."

He was right about this, and about what was to come. But it was too late. □

Bukharin-Kamenev Meeting, July 1928

I. Letter from Sokolnikov to Kamenev

Moscow, July 9, 1928

DEAR L. B.[KAMENEV],

It has been several days since we returned to Moscow—just in time for the plenum.[1] I thought I would find you here, but it seems you are still sitting quietly out in Kaluga. Will you be here anytime soon? I very much need to talk some things over with you and get your advice. Wouldn't it be possible for you to come here for a short while *during the next few days? It would be extremely important.* The plenum, apparently, will end tomorrow. Today discussion is still going on, on Mikoyan's report, and "battles" are breaking out. If possible, answer by telephone (3-49-24). Hoping to see you soon.

Best wishes,
G. Sokolnikov

II. Kamenev's Account of His Conversation with Sokolnikov

Wednesday, July 11, 9 a.m.

SUMMARY: (1) Things have gone much farther; Bukharin has made a final break with Stalin. The question of removal [of Stalin] was posed concretely. *Kalinin and Voroshilov betrayed us.*[2] They are taking a more lenient attitude now, in view of his [Stalin's] concessions. (2) Bukharin said twice: *Don't you understand that I would now give up Stalin for Kamenev and Zinoviev?* Bukharin's position is tragic: he fears most of all that you [Kamenev and Zinoviev] will say Stalin's line is correct. (3) There was no group of "Four" or "Five" in the Politburo—he swears it.[3] (4) Stalin's speech at the plenum: Two streams of Trotskyism, the genuine one—for restorative prices[4]—and the Bukharinist-Trotskyists. In order to develop industry, "tribute from the peasantry is necessary." Likewise Mikoyan: "The scissors will be with us for a long time; the scissors cannot be closed." (They claim that Trotsky too wanted to close the scissors.)[5] Sokolnikov is smuggling in Trotskyism. Molotov: "The middle peasants have become strong; that is why they have begun to clash with us." (5) Bukharin's reply: The tribute theory does not differ in any way from Preobrazhensky's "law of primitive socialist accumulation."[6] Reply by Tomsky: "If Molotov is right, what is the perspective? You want NEP without nepmen, kulaks,[7] or concession-holders; it won't work." Rykov cut Kaganovich to pieces. Conclusions: Stalin's line will be defeated. Bukharin is in a tragic situation. Don't praise Stalin. A positive program can be drawn up jointly with you [Kamenev and Zinoviev]. Bukharin himself wants to have a talk. A bloc to remove Stalin.

Kamenev: Why haven't they done anything?

Sokolnikov: To him [Bukharin] you are *x* and *y*, unknown quantities. Stalin is circulating rumors that he has you in his pocket.

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III. Kamenev's Account of His Conversation with Bukharin

AN HOUR HAD PASSED since my arrival when (at 10 a.m., July 11) without warning or ringing Bukharin and Sokolnikov came in, Sokolnikov leaving toward the end. His [Bukharin's] look was extremely troubled and tormented. With great agitation, talking for an hour without any interruption on my part, he recounted the following. (This record is as accurate as possible.)

"Before coming to the main point of our discussion I should clear up two rumors: (1) There was no vote of 4 to 5 on [your] assignment; there was no discussion of this question at all. (2) The note on Zinoviev's article was dictated by Stalin over my objection, as a compromise with Molotov, who was strenuously opposed to printing Zinoviev's article. [8] Now to the main point.

"1. Things have gone so far in the Central Committee and in the party that you (and probably the Trotskyists too) will inevitably be drawn in and play an important role in deciding the outcome.

"2. When this will happen I do not know. Perhaps it won't happen that quickly, because both sides are still leery of appealing to you. But at any rate within a couple of months it is inevitable.

"3. I therefore want you to know the situation. I know (or assume) that the Stalinists will approach you also. You of course, as political people, will take advantage of the situation to 'up the ante.' But I do not fear that. What will be decisive is the political line and I want you to know what the struggle is about."

4. I [Kamenev]: "Is this really a serious struggle?"

Bukharin: "That is what I wanted to talk with you about. We consider Stalin's line disastrous for the revolution as a whole. This line could bring our downfall. The differences between us and Stalin are many times more serious than all the differences we had with you. Rykov, Tomsky, and I unanimously agree on the formulation that 'It would be much better if we had Zinoviev and Kamenev in the Politburo now, instead of Stalin.' I have discussed this with Rykov and Tomsky quite openly. And for several weeks I have not spoken with Stalin. He is an unprincipled intriguer who subordinates everything to the preservation of his own power. He changes his theories depending on whom he wants to get rid of at the moment. In the Politburo group of 'Seven,'[9] we argued with him to the point of saying 'You lie!' 'You're talking nonsense!' and so on. He has made concessions now, so that later he can cut our throats. We understand this, but he maneuvers in such a way as to make us look like the splitters. The resolution was adopted unanimously because he disavowed Molotov—announcing that he accepted 9/10 of my declaration, which I read to the 'Seven' without letting it out of my hands. (You can't trust him with even the smallest document.) His aim now is to take the Moscow *Pravda* and *Leningrad Pravda* away from us and replace Uglanov (with Kaganovich). Uglanov is with us completely. As for Stalin's line, it is as follows (as he expressed it at the plenum): (1) Capitalism grew either at the expense of colonies or through loans or through the exploitation of the workers. We have no colonies, they won't give us loans, and therefore our base has to be tribute from the peasantry. (You understand that this is the same as Preobrazhensky's theory.) (2) The farther socialism advances, the greater will be the resistance (see the sentence in the resolution). This is idiotic illiteracy. (3) Since tribute is necessary and resistance is bound to grow, a strong leadership is necessary. Self-criticism should not touch the leaders but only those who carry out the policies. But in fact, self-criticism has been directed against Tomsky and Uglanov. The result of this will be a police state. It isn't some question of 'Who fouled the nest?' In reality, the fate of the revolution is at stake. With this theory everything can be destroyed. At the same time, in foreign policy, Stalin is following a right-wing line: he had the Comintern removed from the Kremlin; it was he who proposed that no one be shot in the Shakhty affair (we voted against);[10] and in all

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negotiations he is inclined to make concessions. Tomsky formulated it this way: I (Tomsky) am 30 kilometers to the right of you (Bukharin) in international questions, but I (Tomsky) am 100 kilometers to the left of Stalin. His line is disastrous, but he does not give anyone a chance to discuss it. He sets traps and accuses people of deviations. There is a sentence in his speech where he says that only 'big landowners' can think this way, and refers word for word to a passage in a speech by Uglanov. He will cut our throats."

5. I: "What are your forces?"

Bukharin: "Rykov plus Tomsky plus Uglanov (absolutely) plus myself. The Petrograders are generally with us, but they got frightened when the possibility of replacing Stalin came up, because Komarov disavowed Stetsky's speech; but in the evening Ugarov went out of his way to apologize to me for Komarov.[11] Andreev is for us. He is being removed from the North Caucasus.[12] Stalin has bought the support of the Ukrainians by taking Kaganovich out of the Ukraine.[13] Our potential forces are enormous, but (1) the average Central Committee member still doesn't understand the depth of the differences, and (2) such members are terribly afraid of a split.[14] That was why I had yielded to Stalin on the question of the extraordinary measures, and that made our offensive against him more difficult. We don't want to appear as splitters, because then they would cut our throats. But Tomsky in his last speech at the plenum showed plainly that Stalin was the splitter. Yagoda and Trilisser are ours. There have been small-scale [peasant] revolts in 150 cases. Voroshilov and Kalinin betrayed us at the last moment. I think Stalin has some special hold on them. Our task is to gradually explain Stalin's disastrous role and to persuade the average Central Committee member of the necessity for his removal. The Orgburo is ours."

6. I: "But so far he is removing you."

Bukharin: "What can we do? At this time [his] removal will not go through the Central Committee. Sometimes at night I think to myself, Do we have the right to remain silent? Isn't this lack of courage? But careful reflection tells us to act cautiously. Rykov's report will be given on Friday. There we will dot all the *i*'s. I am going to print a series of articles in *Pravda*. It may be that another blow is needed for the party to understand where he is leading it."

7. As supplements to all this, and in between these supplements [Bukharin presented] a great heap of "revelations" about the "Seven," etc. The tone was of absolute hatred for Stalin and a complete break with him. At the same time there was wavering over whether to come out openly or not to come out. "If we do, they'll cut our throats with the no-splitting clause.[15] If we don't, they'll cut us down by petty chess maneuvers; besides this, they'll dump all the blame on us if there is no grain in October."

I: "But what are they counting on, to get grain?"

Bukharin: "That's the whole problem. On reviving the extraordinary measures if difficulties reappear. But that's war communism, [16] and sure death."

I: "And you?"

Bukharin: "Perhaps it will be necessary to try an even more far-reaching maneuver in order to make peace with the middle peasant. You can hound the kulak as much as you want, but you have to make peace with the middle peasant. But under Stalin, and that blockhead Molotov—who presumes to instruct me in Marxism; we call him 'stone bottom'—nothing can be done."

8. I: "What do you want us to do?"

Bukharin: "Stalin boasts that he has you in his pocket. Everywhere your people (Zhuk., for an individual example) are being lined up to support Stalin. That would be terrible. You will of course decide your own line, but I would beg you not to help Stalin cut our throats by giving him your approval. Stalin will very likely seek to contact you. I want you to know what it's all about."

9. "There is no reason anyone should know of our meeting. Don't talk with me by phone, because my phones are tapped. The GPU

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follows me and the GPU is watching you. I would like us to keep each other informed, but not through secretaries or intermediaries. Only Rykov and Tomsky know that I have talked with you. You too should tell no one. But tell your people not to attack us."

10. I: "Did Stalin show you Zinoviev's memorandum?"

Bukharin: "No. First I've heard."

I: "What will they do with us?"

Bukharin: "I don't know. They don't discuss that with us. Either Stalin will try to 'buy you off' with high appointments or he'll appoint you to such posts in order to commit you in advance; we don't know anything for sure. Goodby. In the next few days I'll be very busy with the Comintern Congress and won't be able to see you. In general we have to observe strict secrecy."

I HAD ARRANGED for Sokolnikov to come by again before my departure.

I gave [Bukharin] your (personal) letter. He read it and said he is afraid of having things on paper. He is afraid a written article would bring trouble. It would be better to talk about the program in person.

Bukharin: "Stalin spoiled the [Comintern draft] program for me in many places."[17] "He himself wanted to give the report on the program at the plenum. (!!!) I had great difficulty fighting him off. He is driven by a desire for recognition as a theorist. He thinks that is the only thing he doesn't yet have."

Other than that, a mass of trifles, details. He [Bukharin] is extremely upset. At times his lips twitch from nervousness. Sometimes he gives the impression of a man who knows he is doomed. My thinking is that, any day now, signals will come from the other camp. We have to wait for them calmly. This is sure to be! Therefore, you should not come here now. We will see what they say. Call me with your answer tomorrow at 8.

July 11, 6 p.m.

MARGINAL NOTE: All this was fawning. I can find no other word for it; politically speaking, of course.

IV. Kamenev's Additions to the Account of Bukharin's Remarks

Night of July 11-12

1. GENERAL IMPRESSION, more than anything, a sense of doom. His phrase: I wonder if all our "fuss" is just masturbation. Sometimes I say to Efim,[18] Aren't things hopeless for us? (1) If the country perishes, we perish. (2) If the country pulls through, Stalin will make a quick about-face and we will still perish. What to do? What can you do when you are dealing with such an opponent: a Genghis Khan; the low cultural level of the Central Committee.

2. Molotov and Stalin on withdrawing from the Wuhan government.[19]

3. Stalin tells the Young Communists: The way the question of juvenile employment will be decided depends on whether Bukharin puts an end to his bad policies.[20]

4. If we begin a discussion, they will cut our throats. The Central Committee fears a discussion.

5. But what if we jointly submit our resignations—Rykov, Tomsky, and I?

6. If I am not removed for a while—two months—I shouldn't get entangled in day-to-day politics. But when a crisis comes, I should speak out plainly and completely openly.

7. We cannot start a discussion because it will immediately turn into armed conflict. For what will be the charges? We would say, Here is the man who has brought the country to ruin and starvation. And he would say, They are defending the kulaks and nepmen.

8. The party and the state have completely merged—that is the whole trouble.

9. Stalin is interested in nothing but holding on to power. In making concessions to us, he kept the key to the leadership, and having kept it, he will cut our throats at a later time. What can we do? Because the subjective conditions within the Central Committee for removing Stalin, while they are maturing, have not yet matured.

10. Sokolnikov: Assume a more active policy; demand at least the removal of Molotov.

11. Stalin knows only one method—revenge, and he does it with the stab in the

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back. Let us remember the theory of "sweet revenge."[21]

12. Sergo [Ordzhonikidze] is no knight in shining armor.[22] He used to come to see me and curse Stalin roundly, but at the decisive moment he betrayed us.

13. A history of the plenum resolution and the fight [within the Politburo]. (1) I called for a general discussion of overall policy. Stalin demurred, saying an industrial-financial plan was necessary, etc. (2) I write Stalin a letter and demand a general discussion. He comes to see me: "Bukharin my friend, you could strain the nerves of an elephant." But he would not agree to a discussion. (3) I write a second letter—he calls me into his office. He begins by saying, "You and I are the Himalayas; the others are nobodies." (4) We go to the "Seven." An ugly scene. He starts shouting at me. I quote his remarks about the Himalayas. He yells, "Liar! You made it up to turn the Politburo against me." We part ways. (5) I read a 20-page declaration, without letting it out of may hands. Molotov pronounces it anti-Leninist and an antiparty document. Stalin: 9/10 of it I can accept. Molotov leaves. This is taken as a basis. I go out to write a resolution. They do too. Unexpectedly they bring in a resolution stolen from my declaration. I make three corrections; Rykov makes one. It's all accepted unanimously. Stalin's reasoning is this: I got grain by using extraordinary measures; I did a turnabout in the nick of time and wrote the resolution myself. If measures become necessary again, I can carry them out alone. But the fact is he will bring us to ruin.

14. Varga will give the report,[23] because Stalin doesn't want Rykov to give it. What to do with this report I still don't know. Varga will argue that famine is inevitable during industrialization!

15. On the Comintern. Sémard is for Stalin, Thälmann is for Stalin. Ewert is not a right-wing Communist but they are forcing him to become one.[24]

16. Stalin violated the decision of the Politburo (the Seven?). The decision was to send Frumkin's letter to all members of the Politburo and draft a reply.[25] Without waiting for that, Stalin wrote a reply and sent it himself. We passed a resolution reprimanding him for violating the decision. Stalin: "The reply was acknowledged to be correct, though not complete. I can't keep dragging things out."

17. On this occasion or on another one, [Bukharin] said to Stalin, "Don't think that the Politburo is just a consultative body under the general secretary."

18. Stalin's policy is leading to civil war. He will have to drown the revolts in blood.

Sokolnikov (taking up Bukharin's remarks): At one drinking bout, Tomsky, completely loaded, leaned over to Stalin and said, "Soon our workers will be shooting at you."

V. Sokolnikov Related the Following: [Kamenev's Account]

July 12, 11 a.m.

FROM THE DEBATES ON COLLECTIVE FARMS only the following is of interest. Stalin gave a rude and vituperative speech against Tomsky. "I listened to Tomsky's speech with great surprise. Tomsky thinks that we have nothing at all to fall back on except concessions to the peasants. That is capitulationism and lack of faith in the building of socialism. And what if the middle peasants demand concessions on the monopoly of foreign trade. Or a peasant union? Concessions there too? That is capitulationism. What we have to fall back on are the state farms and our work among the poor peasants." Swarthy, sour, vindictive, and wrathful. A forbidding sight. Now everyone has understood that not only Bukharin, but Stalin too is on the offensive. The rudeness of it was astonishing.

SOKOLNIKOV'S UNDERSTANDING of the mechanics of the plenum is as follows: Rykov opened the offensive; Stalin replied. The Petrograders wavered and disavowed Stetsky. Then Bukharin dug in and made

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himself a trench, but failed to fire a single shot. Molotov got nasty and fired a volley at *Pravda* (hitting at Astrov in particular, the "one-sidedness" of *Pravda* in general, the footnote to Kritsman, etc.).[26] Then Tomsky attacked Molotov, but in a mild fashion. Finally Stalin attacked Tomsky openly and crudely.

Translated by GEORGE SAUNDERS □

Annotations

1. Plenum of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist party, July 4-12, 1928.

2. Both Mikhail Kalinin and Voroshilov were full members of the nine-member Politburo. The rightist views of Kalinin, titular president of the Soviet Union, were well-known. Voroshilov, commissar of war, was a long-time crony of Stalin, but the Bukharin group apparently assumed that unrest in the peasant army would incline him to their side.

3. A reference to informal caucuses of Politburo members during the earlier factional struggles led by Bukharin and Stalin against Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev.

4. Earlier in the 1920s, "restorative prices" meant state industrial prices sufficient to cover the cost of production and to return a profit to state industry. Here, at the July 1928 plenum, Stalin accused the Bukharinists of advocating "restorative prices" for agricultural goods—that is, higher prices for grain to coax peasant surpluses back onto the market.

5. A reference to a diagram portraying the discrepancy between high industrial and low agricultural prices as the open blades of a pair of scissors.

6. Evgeny Preobrazhensky had been the leading economist of the Trotskyist opposition. His "law," set out in 1924, argued that Soviet state industry could expand rapidly only by exploiting, or obtaining surplus value from, the private peasant sector. The rhetoric of Preobrazhensky's argument was ferocious and caused a major political dispute, but his actual proposal merely called for "nonequivalent exchange" through relatively high industrial prices in market relations between the two sectors.

7. That is, private merchants and better-off peasants.

8. These two points refer to Politburo discussions about restoring Zinoviev and Kamenev to some official position. Part of the price seems to have been a repentant article by Zinoviev, to be published in *Pravda*, of which Bukharin was editor.

9. A reference suggesting that the seven senior members of the Politburo—Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky, Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin, and Voroshilov—met or voted at this time without the two other full members, Valerian Kuibyshev and Ian Rudzutak.

10. In March 1928, the security police announced the uncovering of a counterrevolutionary plot involving technical specialists and foreign governments at the Shakhty mines in the Donbass industrial complex; 55 people were accused of sabotage and treason; many confessed. The whole Shakhty affair, and the trial that followed, remains murky. But Stalin used it to discredit Bukharin's conciliatory class policies, Rykov's management of the state apparatus, and Tomsky's leadership of the trade unions. It became an important part of Stalin's subsequent assault on the nonparty intelligentsia in 1929-30. Though Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky seem not to have doubted the original criminal charges, they fought hard in the Politburo to limit the ramifications of the affair.

11. The Leningrad (formerly called Petrograd) delegation to the Central Committee plenum included Nikolai Komarov, the Bukharinist Aleksei Stetsky, and Tomsky's trade-union colleague Feodor Ugarov.

12. Andrei Andreev, party boss of the North Caucasus region, actually sided with Stalin and was not removed.

13. Kaganovich was probably the ablest and most despised of Stalin's lieutenants; his three-year tyranny, when he was general secretary of the Ukrainian party, had outraged native Ukrainian leaders.

14. The expression "average Central Committee member" (*seredniak tsekist*) is ambiguous here. It could mean average, middle-ranking, or uncommitted member.

15. The ban on intraparty factions adopted in 1921 and the basis on which earlier oppositionists had been castigated and even expelled from the party.

16. A reference to the grain requisitioning measures during the Russian civil war of 1918-21.

17. Bukharin was preparing a draft program of the Comintern for the upcoming congress.

18. As noted in the original document, Efim Tseitlin, Bukharin's secretary.

19. After the Kuomintang led by Chiang Kai-shek had suddenly massacred its Communist allies in Shanghai in

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April 1927, a separatist left-Kuomintang regime had been set up in Wuhan (Hankow) with Comintern support. Comintern policy in the Chinese civil war had been a major subject of contention between the Bukharin-Stalin leadership and the left opposition in 1927.

20. Stalin was seeking support among Young Communists (Komsomols) by arguing that the industrial and trade-union policies of Bukharin and Tomsky deprived young people of job opportunities.

21. Chatting over wine with Kamenev and Feliks Dzerzhinsky in 1923, Stalin had described what he loved most in life as follows: "The greatest delight is to mark one's enemy, prepare everything, avenge oneself thoroughly, and then go to sleep." See Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), p. 211.

22. Grigory Ordzhonikidze, head of the Central Control Commission, the party's disciplinary body.

23. Eugene Varga, a prominent economist and Comintern official.

24. Pierre Sémard, leader of the French Communist party, and Ernst Thälmann and Arthur Ewert, leaders of the German party.

25. On June 15, 1928, Moshe Frumkin, Deputy Commissar of Finance, sent the Politburo a letter bleakly evaluating the consequences of Stalin's policy in the countryside and urging Bukharinist remedies.

26. Valentin Astrov was a young follower of Bukharin and one of his deputy editors at *Pravda*. A critical editorial note had been attached to an article by the economist Lev Kritsman praising Stalin's coercive measures in the countryside.

STEPHEN F. COHEN □

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Tibor Meray

Budapest — 20 Years Later

In Memory of Imre Nagy

The man whose memory we honor here was 62 years old when he was murdered. He was the same age as Aldo Moro. A coincidence, of course. A more curious coincidence is that both men were kidnapped as they were coming out of a building and about to enter their cars; Aldo Moro was leaving his home in Rome, Imre Nagy the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest. Both were taken hostage and detained in the strictest secrecy and isolation; the one man was held captive for little more than a month, the other for almost two years. Both were condemned to death in secret trials, and the world learned of their executions only after their deaths. The Italian was killed by the Red Brigades of Rome, the Hungarian by the Red Brigades of Moscow and Budapest.

There are, of course, numerous differences. Imre Nagy was not kidnapped alone but together with his family and his closest associates; he was not killed alone but together with several of his friends. Whereas the world press gave front-page coverage to Aldo Moro's captivity for so long as it lasted, it all but forgot Imre Nagy a day after his abduction. The Pope offered himself in exchange for Moro; no one concerned himself about Nagy. The murderers of Moro considered themselves enemies of the state; the killers of Imre Nagy had supreme control over the state. The former are pursued by police the world over; with the latter one cordially shakes hands and signs treaties of human rights.

There are differences, likewise, in the behavior of the two men, and I say this without any lapse of respect for Aldo Moro, because no one who has not endured the same ordeal as he could cast a stone at him. Seized together with Imre Nagy were his wife, his only daughter, his son-in-law, and his two very young grandchildren. It is clear that for almost two years his jailers did not refrain from using every means of pressure, blackmail, and physical and psychological torture in order to break him. However, they did not manage to extort from this man (or from any of his murdered companions) one thing—not a single word that would have been a denial of himself, his friends, or of the Hungarian revolution. Today it is known that he would have had to write not a series of letters but merely to sign a short statement in order to save his life. He did not do it. In the days when Christians were persecuted, martyrs were numerous; but in our time, when it is Communists who exterminate Communists, they are quite rare.

The differences do not end here. In Rome, the Red Brigades returned the corpse of Aldo Moro, and so his family was able to at least bury him. To this day, no one knows where the bodies of Imre Nagy and his comrades are. Mme. Nagy died in the spring of 1978. She survived her husband by some 20 years, but it was never possible for her to visit his grave. Should it be necessary to remind ourselves that we are living not in the Stone Age or in the Middle Ages but in the late 20th century, 200 years after the Declaration of the Rights of Man, 30 years after the signing of the United Nations Charter, and three years after the signing of the Helsinki Agreements? In a period when Hungary is considered the most liberal of the Communist

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countries? It makes one wonder what the others may be like. . . .

Of course, the people who killed Imre Nagy charged that he was a traitor. What had he betrayed? Communism? Socialism? Would those people seriously claim that communism or socialism had been achieved in the Soviet Union or in Hungary? How could one betray something that does not exist? In 1918, when he was a young worker, Imre Nagy had fought as a volunteer in the Red Army against White Russian forces. During the '20s, when extreme-right elements controlled Hungary, he was an underground Communist and was jailed several times. He spent more than ten years as an exile in Moscow, where he was one of the people who directed antifascist propaganda programs. Back in Hungary, in 1945 he became Minister of Agriculture and presided over the distribution of the big estates among Hungarian peasants. President of the Council of Ministers for the first time, in 1953-55, he opened the prison gates to survivors of Stalin's repression. On October 23, 1956, the day when revolution broke out in Budapest, workers, peasants, writers, artists, and youth demanded that this particular Communist should be named to head the government. The leaders of the totally disoriented Party and Moscow's official emissaries asked him to assume direction of the government in order to save what could be saved. On November 1, three days before the Soviets intervened, he, together with Janos Kadar, founded the new Communist party—the same party that is to this day in control in Hungary. This, in brief, is the portrait of a "traitor," of a "counterrevolutionary."

It is true—and entirely to his credit—that he did not always share the opinions of Moscow and of the Stalinist leaders of his own party. Do we not hear it said today that this is true of Aragon, Marchais, Berlinguer, Carrillo, not to mention Garaudy, Althusser, Ellenstein, or Daix? Does it not follow logically that these Communists would sooner or later be put to death also if, happily for them, they did not live in bourgeois countries?

His behavior during the revolution is said to have been Imre Nagy's crime. . . . Now, I would be the last to claim that he was perfection personified and that no mistakes could be charged against him. He was more a man of science, an agrarian expert, than a pragmatic politician. But I should like to know who . . . in the Hungary of that period, in the midst of a tempest and with a people in turmoil, under pressure from the Soviet occupiers and with even the Western media fulminating against him—who would have been capable of carrying out Nagy's functions without making a single mistake?

And what are the mistakes charged against him and against the whole Hungarian revolution? His scornful accusers say that to denounce the Warsaw Pact was a mistake; that—especially in a country that had been Hitler's last ally—to tolerate public violence was a mistake; it was also a mistake to reestablish a pluralistic political-party system, and to proclaim Hungary's neutrality.

Rather than discuss these actions in detail here, I would like to recall something else. Twelve years later in Prague—although the Czechs had never been allies of Hitler—the Warsaw Pact was not denounced, no pluralistic political-party system was reestablished, nobody was lynched in the streets, the country was not declared neutral—yet Soviet tanks crushed the Czech movement!

Just as in Prague later—in 1956 it was not for its faults but for its virtues that the Soviets liquidated the Hungarian revolution. Far from fearing a counterrevolutionary or neofascist Hungary, it was an independent, democratic, and socialist Hungary that Moscow feared. The revolution was not put down during the period of atrocities but when a renewed and strengthened government had already put an end to them. Soviet intervention occurred after duly constituted workers' councils had declared that there could be no question of returning factories to their former capitalist owners; when the revolutionary committees in the villages had spoken up unequivocally in defense of the agrarian reform, ergo, against the old semifeudal order. Soviet intervention was unleashed when neutrality had guaranteed that Hungary would not join the Western bloc.

That is where the true and great danger lay—in a Hungary (as later, in Czechoslovakia) that would have attempted to place the superstructure of democratic rights over the infrastructure of common ownership of the means of production. A neofascist Hungary would have played the role of bugbear in Central and Eastern Europe—and that the Kremlin could even have tolerated. But a democratic socialist Hungary would have been an example for the other satellites. And that could not be tolerated. . . .

THE PEOPLE WHO FAIL on life's stage are rarely perceived as having been right. That great old prostitute History prefers the rich, the strong, the successful. And yet today, 20 years after his death, one seems to hear the name of Imre Nagy more and more often. He is recalled as a precursor of the

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Eurocommunism about which there is so much talk today. I think I am right in remembering that the chemical formula for water is H^2O, but so far as I know, no such structural formula for Eurocommunism has yet been set forth, which is not surprising since its major representatives—the Italian, Spanish, and French Communist parties—agree and disagree about issues in equal parts. (But perhaps it is precisely the right to differ that is one of the characteristics of this movement?). . .

What I can say . . . on the basis of the wealth of ideas in his published writings . . . is that Imre Nagy was the first to assert that the kind of Communism needed is a Commumism that "does not forget the human individual." More than a decade before the wonderful Prague spring, he was the originator and the first martyr of "socialism with a human face."

And in the area of international relations, at the time of the Bandung Conference, Imre Nagy proposed a very simple idea—audacious and inspired in its simplicity: that what was called the Five Fundamental Principles—national independence, sovereignty, equality of rights, mutual respect for the rights of every nation, and noninterference in the domestic affairs of other nations, should be as valid among socialist nations as between socialist and capitalist nations. At the time that meant, as it does today, that the Soviet Union must not consider the peoples' democracies as its colonies, and that the Communist party in the U.S.S.R. must forgo considering other Communist parties as auxiliaries.

Whether those who declare for Eurocommunism today recognize themselves in these two concepts is for them to say. For myself, I will add just one thing. The Eurocommunists recall, often and proudly, that they condemned—more exactly, they disapproved of—Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. That is true, and we rejoiced for it. But I will point out that the evil did not begin in Prague. Before Prague, there had been Budapest, and before Budapest there had been Poznan, and before Poznan there had been East Berlin, and before East Berlin there had been the Gulag, and before the Gulag there had been the Moscow trials, and before the Moscow trials there had been Kronstadt. My own eyes were opened late enough for me never to be tempted to lecture someone who lost his blinkers even later than I. Laszlo Rajk was blind during the Moscow purges, we were blind during the Rajk trial, and Dubček was blind when, in 1956, the Hungarian revolution was crushed. Sad as this may be, the true misfortune is not that eyes are slow to open but that they may be incapable of looking far enough—backward. We are waiting, we are hoping passionately for the day to come when the eyes of Eurocommunists will see at least beyond Prague to Budapest. . . .

Permit me to conclude my remarks with some reflections on the matter of credibility. When we were engaged in our struggle, credibility was our most difficult problem. Whatever we might do, write, or say while fighting Stalinism in the years before the revolution, the so-called free world responded only with incredulity, irony, and doubt. The supposition was that we were acting on the orders of our Stalinist masters. It was also claimed that there was a new division of roles between the "hard-liners" and the "liberals," so as to gain the confidence of the people, and especially to mislead the country and the world: one Communist is no better than another, the free world opined, and even if their differences are real, let's let them devour each other; we're on the sidelines in this game, there's nothing in it for us. The revolution had already erupted, and an armed struggle was underway between Hungarian insurgents and Soviet tanks, and still Radio Free Europe was exhorting Budapest: "Hungarians, do not put your trust in Imre Nagy! . . . Imre Nagy and his acolytes want to repeat the snare of the Trojan horse, which they have slyly modernized." The defeat of the revolution and the later martyrdom of Imre Nagy were required for the world to learn that among Communists there were—and are—patriots, decent people, and that things are not as simple as, on one side, Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin and, on the other side, John Foster Dulles and Senator McCarthy imagined them to be.

For the dissidents who came after us—Polish, Czech, Rumanian, East German, and Soviet—the situation has been somewhat eased because the West has come to understand their position better, and today this is an advantage also for the Eurocommunists. If these diverging ways of thinking, if these diverging values have won some measure of trust, that is owed to *us,* to us Hungarians of 1956 who laid the foundations for the authenticity and sincerity of this evolution by our struggles, our suffering, our exile—and in the case of Imre Nagy, Pal Maleter, Geza Losonczy, Josef Szilagyi, Miklos Gimes, and many other nameless comrades, at the price of their lives.

If in our time a ghost haunts Europe, it is the shade of victims who have lost their lives in the name of that other ghost announced in the opening words of the Communist Manifesto. . . .

—*Translated by* ADRIENNE FOULKE □

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Victoria E. Bonnell

Soviet Russia: More Goods, More Problems

One evening last year I waited on a downtown Moscow streetcorner to meet a friend. It was after 9:00 P.M. and a bitter November wind made me take refuge behind a huge canvas portrait of Lenin, erected for the annual celebration of the revolution. The only other person in sight was a Soviet policeman on his beat, assigned to guard the Lenin portrait. In a plush grey and red uniform, this Soviet big-city cop might have stepped out of a propaganda poster featuring youthful builders of Communism.

I struck up a conversation. He asked where life was better—in the United States or the Soviet Union. I replied that the standard of living of most Americans was vastly higher than it is in the Soviet Union. He knew all about America, he said, because he listened to the Voice of America, but he doubted that life there could be much more prosperous than in the U.S.S.R. His own life had seen unimaginable material improvements. Born in 1955 in a village, he had gone directly from secondary school into the army (a common fate for those who do not go on to higher education), and from the army he had been recruited into the Moscow militia, a job native Moscovites generally disdain. Now he earned an adequate living, and even dreamed of owning an automobile. He insisted that our countries must be very much alike: everywhere one could find both rich and poor.

The policeman had little doubt that in material terms his life would continue to improve steadily, but he did have complaints. The major one centered on the availability of options, such as the right to choose one's place of residence (internal mobility in the U.S.S.R. is severely restricted), to travel abroad or even to train in a favorite sport as a pastime (such training is geared to producing champion athletes). Did these restrictions exist in my country? Were American policemen also obliged to work without pay? The Komsomol (Communist Youth organization) made him put in many hours of voluntary labor and this he hotly resented.

The policeman talked on about his desire for a more interesting job, his yearning to travel, and his skepticism about the official media ("I don't believe anything I read in the papers!"). Nevertheless, his discontent was more than offset by the satisfaction he derived from tangible improvements in his standard of living. On parting he asked me to give California the regards of a Soviet policeman!

Since 1970, I have spent nearly a year and a half living in the Soviet Union and have grown to appreciate the rare opportunities to converse at length with "ordinary" Soviet citizens. When I first spent time in Moscow eight years ago, my exchange with the policeman probably would not have taken place. This 22-year-old Soviet policeman is a product of the post-Stalinist era, a member of a new generation unfamiliar with the fears created by the Stalinist terror. His outlook reflects the tremendous improvements in the standard of living for many Russians. The consumer sector of the Soviet economy has been markedly upgraded since 1970, particularly with respect to clothing, home furnishings, appliances, and housing. The food situation is the major exception to this pattern of improvement. In some respects the shortages are even graver today than they were eight years ago. In the winter of 1976, food stores ran out of two staples in the Russian diet: potatoes and onions. In 1977, very little meat was available, and there was an inadequate supply of milk. These items can, however, be found in peasant markets, though at prices far higher than in state stores.

Notwithstanding persistent and often severe food shortages, a consumer leap forward has taken place. Eight years ago, a Western visitor to the Soviet Union was highly conspicuous. When I first arrived at Moscow's Belorusskii railroad station in August 1970, a crowd of onlookers gathered as I waited for a taxi. They stared at me with intense interest and a certain degree of resentment. My appearance (brown corduroys and a Marimekko blouse) was certainly odd from their point of view. On two recent trips to Moscow, in 1976 and 1977, I found that foreigners no longer attract special attention. Indeed, I was frequently mistaken for a Russian and asked to furnish directions. My appearance had not changed; but that of many Russians has been so drastically improved that it is no longer so easy to distinguish the foreigner from the native.

On my last visit, I discovered that the cloth *sumka* (shopping bag), carried at all times by Russians on alert for an unexpected buy, has been partly supplanted by plastic shopping bags, colorfully imprinted with the name of a foreign

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product or firm or the emblem of the Soviet "Beriozka" that sells otherwise unavailable Russian and foreign merchandise for hard currency (and thus only to foreigners or to privileged members of the Soviet elite). The plastic *sumka* symbolizes the Soviet obsession with quality consumer goods, a virtual synonym for products manufactured outside the Soviet Union.

IN CONTRAST to 1970, there now is a larger selection of goods in the stores, though the overall impression is still dismal. Low-quality, dreary products predominate. In Leningrad, I spent a whole evening roaming through the vast department store, Gostinnyi dvor, a two-storied structure extending the length and width of four city blocks. Hundreds of Leningraders strolled haplessly along the corridors stocked with many essentials but few really attractive items (one exception: the bustling record department, which carried Soviet reissues of the Beatles, Louis Armstrong, and several English rock groups). Certainly, the typical merchandise in Soviet stores cannot account for the variety and quality of clothing one sees in Moscow and to a lesser extent in Leningrad. Merchandise is entering the economy through other channels.

The increase in Soviet tourism to East European countries and the West—a very recent phenomenon—has accelerated the flow of foreign goods. The network of special stores reserved for the Soviet elite and for foreigners also serves as a conduit for distribution through the black market and informal networks. Here one can purchase Italian shoes, English-made apparel for men and women, French cosmetics, fur coats, and sometimes even blue jeans. Occasionally a small quantity of such items goes on sale in regular stores and hundreds of people wait in line. Near my hotel, 150 people waited three hours to purchase women's face powder manufactured in Hungary! Hard-to-get items are sometimes even hawked illicitly on the street. In Leningrad I was stopped several times by Gypsies who offered to sell me eye shadow and other cosmetics. This represents just the tip of the black-market iceberg that extends throughout Soviet society and makes available to the consumer anything from panty hose to automobiles.

Some of the good-looking women's apparel that I saw was probably made to order in state tailoring shops or by a seamstress, and surely some women have purchased sewing machines to make their own clothing. At the Lenin Library, I saw women as well dressed as any in London or Paris. They are still a tiny minority, but seven years ago such people were not in evidence at all. In contrast to women in the United States, Soviet women are trying hard to become "sex objects," accentuating their femininity through cosmetics and clothing.

Since the death of Stalin, pressure has been mounting to upgrade the appallingly low standard of living. And now, significantly, for the first time major improvements have actually come within the reach of many Soviet citizens. The accoutrements of the good life—a decent private apartment, attractive furnishings, a car, a dacha (summer cottage)—formerly available only to a small segment of the elite, have now become accessible to a growing number of ordinary people—professionals, engineers, even highly skilled workers.

At the time of my first visit to the Soviet Union, there were few visible signs of economic inequality. People tended to present a uniformly dreary appearance. Those who belonged to the privileged elite concealed their good fortune behind the unimposing facades of their apartment buildings, a custom that continues to this day among the most affluent segments of the elite (see Hedrick Smith's unsurpassed description of Soviet elite living in *The Russians*). But now inequality has become increasingly evident in everyday life. In the subways, smartly dressed women in expensive fur coats and imported leather boots sit next to others who wear the coarse and shabby clothing that was standard for the population in 1970. The envious and resentful gaze formerly directed at foreigners is now directed at other Soviet citizens.

Evidence of inequality in large urban centers is paralleled by even more striking contrasts between rural and urban life in the Soviet Union (nearly half the population still lives in rural areas) and between provincial towns and such major cities as Moscow and Leningrad. As differentiation proceeds within the urban population, the contrasts between the major urban centers and the rest of the country become even sharper. Provincial visitors flocking to Moscow now seem to belong to another century.

Economic inequality, then, is more evident today than at any time since the 1920s, and there is reason to believe that class differences will become increasingly visible. In this self-proclaimed "socialist" society, it is ironic that the first major qualitative and quantitative improvement of material standards in six decades has been accompanied by growing social stratification. The implications of this development are far-reaching.

Driven by rising expectations, people compete ferociously to acquire positions that will guarantee access to a better life for themselves and their children. This frequently requires membership in

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the Communist party, since opportunities for swift upward mobility are commonly reserved for party members. Careerism, not idealism, induces educated young people to join the party these days, and political subservience is the price they pay for social mobility. Political conformity, of course, has always been a condition for advancement in the Soviet system, but now it is traded as an above-the-board item in open barter between aspiring citizens and the state. As they rise in the ranks of the Soviet middle class, these people are likely to contribute little to the liberalization of Soviet society. Under present conditions of scarcity, those who have recently acquired a car, a dacha, or a trip to the West are not likely to take political risks that would jeopardize their newly won privileges.

A growing crime rate is likely to be another consequence of the changing economic scene. Crime in the Soviet Union is concentrated in urban areas (three-quarters of all juvenile crime occurs in cities), and most criminal offenders belong to educationally and economically disadvantaged segments of society—the people who most vividly experience relative deprivation. It is significant that the largest single category of adult and juvenile crime involves offenses against property. Prosperous Moscovites and Leningraders are becoming as fastidious as New Yorkers in protecting personal property against theft (including the routine removal of windshield wipers from automobiles, since these are in great demand and short supply), and although the Soviets withhold publication of crime statistics, there is evidence that criminal activity is on the upsurge (see V. Chalidze's recent study, *Criminal Russia*).

NOW THAT SOVIET CITIZENS are no longer as isolated as in earlier days, they have a growing awareness of living standards outside their own borders. The Moscow policeman readily volunteered that he listened to the Voice of America and knew "all about" life in the United States. Gradually, the regime's monopoly on information is being eroded. More than anything else, the mass availability of the shortwave radio and the cessation of most jamming in the early 1970s put millions of Soviets in contact with the West for the first time.

In 1970 it was difficult to purchase a shortwave radio in ordinary stores, and people who listened to foreign broadcasts did so more or less clandestinely. Today, shortwave radios of Soviet make can be purchased in major department stores in Moscow and Leningrad for about 100 rubles. One night, in a Moscow taxi, I noticed that a shortwave radio was mounted on the dashboard and tuned to the BBC Russian-language news!

The shortwave has been a tremendous asset to the Soviet dissident movement. Illegal underground publications and news (*samizdat*) produced by the dissidents have been beamed to the Soviet Union by the Voice of America, the BBC, the Voice of Israel, and other stations, reaching a far wider audience than would have been possible by the written word. Some of these broadcasts are tape-recorded and further disseminated (dissenters call this *magnitizdat*).

Soviet contacts with the West have vastly increased during the 1970s. An upsurge in tourism, expansion of economic relations with Western countries, and the enlargement of various scholarly exchanges all have augmented the number of foreign vistors. Soviet authorities have proposed a substantial enlargement of the official U.S.-U.S.S.R. annual scholars exchange. Large numbers of American businessmen and technicians now are in the Soviet Union, some of them on long-term arrangements.

Now that Russians themselves are traveling abroad in greater numbers than at any time since the 1920s, they bring back impressions of the world beyond Soviet borders, whether of Budapest or New York. More than 150,000 people have permanently left the U.S.S.R. since the early 1970s, but they usually maintain close contact with those who remain behind. Letters and phone conversations have probably provided more detailed information about life in the West than any other source except the shortwave.

The Soviet media attempt to counteract the effects of these contacts by presenting an official version of Western life. Clearly, the media image of rampant unemployment, destitution and hopelessness in the West makes an impression on a great many people. I was frequently asked whether massive unemployment really exists in the U.S. Russians generally give guarded credibility to these officical accounts, even while simultaneously imagining the West as a land of affluence and opportunity. On the one hand they believe that millions of Americans eat garbage and sleep in the gutter; on the other, they conjure up a glossy image of large single-family homes and two-car garages.

The 1970s have thus brought about two major changes in Soviet society: a qualitative improvement in the material standard of living and a disruption in the regime's monopoly on information, especially about life beyond Soviet borders. Delivery of the goods now ranks as a leading factor in the system's equilibrium. Propaganda and the

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secret police are, of course, still ubiquitous, but ideology and coercion no longer suffice to bind people to the regime. The continued availability of color television sets, single-family apartments, and automobiles are probably essential if social stability is to be maintained.

The key question is whether the Soviet economy with its deficit agricultural sector and its gross inefficiency can meet the massive demand for quality goods and services. So far the consumer problem has been partly solved by resorting to the importation of foreign merchandise on a considerable scale, both officially and through unofficial channels. But given the chronic setbacks in the Soviet economy and continuing failure to achieve economic détente with the U.S., this solution to the consumer problem may not be viable in the long run.

PERHAPS with the long term in mind, the authorities have moved harshly to repress political dissidence. Seven years ago the Soviet Union had a dissident movement of remarkable proportions, involving hundreds of activists and many thousands of sympathizers who read and circulated underground (*samizdat*) publications. Today, this movement has been eclipsed by a combination of arrests, forced emigration, and voluntary departures. Since the big crackdown in 1973 with the arrest of P. Yakir and V. Krasin, two leaders of the dissident movement who recanted under interrogation and implicated dozens of others, the movement has been in decline. Of the former leaders only Andrei Sakharov remains at liberty. Nor is it likely that new people will soon emerge to take the place of those removed from the scene, for the regime has struck not only at the leadership but also at the second and third echelons of the dissenters—people unknown in the West who have worked quietly and unobtrusively to keep the movement going. These people are now called to the secret police for interrogation; they are threatened, intimidated, and pressured to halt their activity.

Insofar as organized opposition continues, it is carried on mainly by national and religious groups: Jews, Ukrainians, Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists, Lithuanian Catholics, and others. Undoubtedly, the most important and surprising recent development concerns the involvement of workers in open dissent. In January 1978, 43 workers drew up a charter for the Trade Union for the Defense of Workers, the first independent labor organization in Russia since the 1920s. The appearance of working-class protest in this "paradise of the toiling masses" obviously has immense significance, and recent examples of labor unrest in Eastern Europe serve both to encourage the workers and alarm the authorities. The official response has been swift and savage. Continuation of this incipient movement will depend on the workers' ability to establish links with other branches of the dissident community. During my recent visit, I was informed that at least in the major cities, workers listen to shortwave Russian-language broadcasts and discuss these programs openly; some *samizdat* literature is said to be in circulation among them.

The decline of the human rights movement has coincided with a rise in religious feeling among many former dissident activists and a much larger group of their sympathizers. The interest in religion (including Hinduism and Buddhism) dates back to the 1960s, but the trend toward Russian Orthodoxy gained real momentum with the disintegration of the dissident movement. It seems that the energy consumed earlier by attempts to reform society is now feeding the newly acquired religious fervor. All of this calls to mind the "chiliasm of despair" noted by historians in cases where religiosity follows on the heels of political frustration. The spiritual and social comforts offered by the Russian Orthodox Church have drawn a substantial number of dissidents and a broader circle of alienated intellectuals, including many Jews, into the Church. This attraction takes various forms, from genuine religious conversion to fashionable conversation.

The appeal of Russian Orthodoxy more importantly reflects the need these people feel for independence from the official belief system and for a positive identification with their Russian heritage. For many, Orthodox Christianity offers the only alternative world view in the Soviet Union.

Membership in the Russian Orthodox Church also fulfills the deep longing people have for a community that stands apart from and in opposition to Soviet society at large. Some years ago, the dissident movement itself created a sense of community among participants and sympathizers. With the decimation of that movement, Russian Orthodoxy filled the void. Friendships are now increasingly formed on the basis of religious affiliation, with the believers drawing closer together.

Unlike involvement in the dissident movement, involvement in the Church generally does not entail severe punitive measures. An adult who

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undergoes baptism may risk serious employment difficulties or expulsion from a university, but not a long labor-camp sentence. One acquaintance of mine—herself a baptized but inactive member of the Russian Orthodox Church—recently decided that her grown daughter should be baptized. The daughter consented with mild enthusiasm, but since she was enrolled in a university, there was a risk of expulsion (an official record of all baptisms and other church rituals is forwarded to the local authorities). The mother and daughter resolved this problem by traveling thousands of miles to a distant city in order to perform the baptism—on the assumption that the Soviet bureaucracy operates so inefficiently that the daughter will have graduated and found a job by the time the information reaches the city where they live.

Toward the end of my stay, I was introduced to a woman who represented a very different aspect of the religious movement in the 1970s. This woman, an instructor of English at a major Soviet university, combined Orthodox beliefs with a nationalistic, anti-Semitic, and authoritarian outlook. In her view, anyone who emigrates from the Soviet Union is a traitor to the country and destined to wither on foreign shores. "How about Chagall, Stravinsky, and Kandinsky?" I asked. "They would have been much greater had they remained in Russia," she said. I replied that they would undoubtedly have suffered the same death as Mandelstam and Babel, or perhaps the fate of the great living writers, Brodsky and Solzhenitsyn, who have been persecuted by the regime and exiled against their will. She had known Brodsky and claimed the poet richly deserved his sentence to forced labor in the mid-1960s: such people are parasites who have nothing to offer society. Anti-Semitism, she insisted, was merely the reaction of many people to the Jewish demand for emigration.

This woman is an Orthodox believer and, to that extent, herself a nonconformist in a society that takes a harsh view of traditional religion. Yet she subscribes to a "law-and-order" approach to the dissident movement and has no sympathy for the victims of official injustice. It would be a mistake, then, to assume that religious conversion necessarily implies a critical stance toward the Soviet *political* system. In many instances, religiosity coincides with political dissent, but nationalism, anti-Semitism, and authoritarianism can also coexist with religious belief. The growing appeal of religion must therefore be interpreted with caution. It presents a challenge to the official Soviet Marxist orthodoxy, but it may also have helped to stimulate retrograde political tendencies within the intelligentsia. There is reason to suspect that more than a few Russians share some of the basic attitudes displayed by this woman, and it is not far-fetched to imagine that future disappointments on the consumer front might be channeled by the authorities into precisely this sort of chauvinism and anti-Semitism—much as the Czars did before 1917 and Stalin in the late 1940s and early '50s.

IN THE FUTURE, Soviet leaders will have to reckon with a society in which the popular aspiration for material progress has intensified, official control over information has declined, and a new generation that never experienced the gut fear of the Stalin years is moving to the foreground. The major question is whether the regime can accommodate the rising expectations of its citizens, particularly in light of the economy's poor overall performance in recent years. The authorities must also face a continuation of the dissident movement--which is in decline but has not disappeared—as well as the steadily increasing appeal of institutional religion among the young and educated, a development with complex political potential. Soviet citizens like the policeman and others with whom I spoke represent a new generation in the Soviet Union—people who are less fearful, more hopeful, more cynical, and better informed than their predecessors of the Stalin era. They are a new force, amorphous perhaps but quite real, and they will play a decisive role in shaping the country's future. □

To Our Contributors

- When sending manuscripts, please make sure that you do not send your only copy.
- And please also be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. —The Editors

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Nicolaus Mills

The Unions and the Mobs

John Ford in *Grapes of Wrath,* Martin Ritt in *The Molly Maguires,* Hal Ashby in *Bound for Glory* have all shown that the union movement can be powerful material for the screen. Yet we do not have in this country the Hollywood equivalent of Eisenstein's *Strike* or even Mario Monicelli's *The Organizer.* The closest we come are independent productions like Herbert Biberman's *Salt of the Earth* or such documentaries as Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County, U.S.A.* Hollywood directors, even when they have had a star like Henry Fonda or Sean Connery or David Carradine at their disposal, have tended to mute their union issues and in the end replace them with some other concern.

Two recent films, Paul Schrader's *Blue Collar* and Norman Jewison's *F.I.S.T.,* reflect this same pattern. Although unions—those of the auto workers and teamsters—are central to each picture, they are in the end films that rely on the mob and gangland killings for dramatic impact. The unions in *Blue Collar* and *F.I.S.T.* are so dependent on organized crime for their survival that often both films seem perfectly matched to the current political climate in which "sophistication" consists in assuming that all unions, like any organization from General Motors to the CIA, are corrupt and will automatically break the law to get their way. When interviewed, both directors have said as much. "In my mind, the government, the company, and the unions are all the same. They are the Captains of Industry, who rule the world," Paul Schrader recently observed, and in answer to a question about the purposes of *F.I.S.T.,* Norman Jewison told the *New York Times,* "It is really about power and how power corrupts."

Despite their underlying pessimism, neither *Blue Collar* nor *F.I.S.T.* can, however, be dismissed as Hollywood films that raise the question of unionism only to bypass it for something else. They are too rich for that. They may lack the focused intensity of a documentary like last year's Academy Award-winning *Harlan County, U.S.A.,* but for all their emphasis on crime and the mob, they mark a new stage in Hollywood's depiction of unions.

We see this very clearly when we compare them to the movie that more than any other might be called the archetypal crime-labor film, Elia Kazan's 1954 *On the Waterfront.* Like *Blue Collar* and *F.I.S.T., On the Waterfront* appeared during a period of political reaction and in its portrayal of New York's longshoremen's unions capitalized on what was seen as a "real" situation. Yet in *On the Waterfront* the questions of how a union is run, how it becomes tied in with the mob, how it might be changed internally, what it is like to work on the docks remain peripheral. What we see of a union boss—Johnny Friendly (Lee J. Cobb) counting up his take and ordering his goons to do a job—is so sketchy that it seems like caricature. At the end of *On the Waterfront* it is not the men in Friendly's union who start him on his way down but the Waterfront Crime Commission, and the serious drama of the film turns on whether Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando) will summon up the courage to go against the code of silence he has been taught and tell the Crime Commission what he knows about Friendly.

By contrast *Blue Collar* and *F.I.S.T.* never put a gloss over what it means to work eight hours a day at brutalizing labor; nor do they make the relationship between the mob and unions so simple that in the end we can imagine the FBI or a Senate Rackets Committee becoming the bureaucratic force that will guarantee clean unions. There is a dramatic thickness to both movies that makes it clear how personal and political desperateness (especially the use of the mob) can arise out of situations in which the conditions and pay for work are humiliating, and both movies close with freeze-frame shots suggesting that only those who have worked under such conditions can fully comprehend this relationship.

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Blue Collar begins with the most telling portrayal of an assembly line since *Modern Times*. But where Chaplin showed the mechanical taking over the human, in Schrader's opening montage there is no room for the human. As the camera moves down the assembly line what we see is a netherworld of auto parts, welding sparks, and shadows. The music from the soundtrack—Captain Beefheart singing "Hard Workin' Man"—is deafening at this point, but when the music stops, the noise from the plant is even worse. When a welder tells his foreman that he is getting "brain cancer" from his job, it is the insight rather than the wit of the joke that is striking. What we want to know is whether there is a way of coping with this kind of routine, and the answer we get in the first half of *Blue Collar* is that the line dominates the lives of the men who work on it.

In scene after scene we see the frustration of three Checker Cab makers, Smokey (Yaphet Kotto), Jerry (Harvey Keitel), and Zeke (Richard Pryor) as they travel back and forth from the bar they hang out in after work, to their union hall, to their homes. Only at the bar do they seem genuinely at ease. At their union hall, a dreary room decorated with posters of Martin Luther King and John Kennedy, they are in open conflict with their shop steward, who wants only to advance his own career. Home, especially for Jerry and Zeke who have families, is not a place of refuge either. It is a reminder that they make enough to afford TVs and cars but not enough to enjoy them.

This feeling of desperateness does more, however, than account for the anger Smokey, Jerry, and Zeke feel. It also explains the action that sets off the second half of *Blue Collar,* their robbery of their union local's safe. It is a robbery that all three men look on as a way of "getting back," but what it leads to is their undoing. In short order they become fugitives, and *Blue Collar* declines into a heist movie. The take from the robbery is only $600, and when along with the money Smokey, Jerry, and Zeke discover a record of their union's loan-sharking, they are in trouble. Through a police informant, the union learns who has robbed it and immediately sets out to silence all three men. Smokey is killed in an industrial accident the union arranges. Zeke is bought off with a promotion to shop steward, and after an attempt on his life fails, Jerry goes to the FBI for protection.

The result is a movie in which the first half seems as if it were based on a script by Harvey Swados and the second half on one by Alfred Hitchcock. Yet the extremes of *Blue Collar* do not lead to its trivialization. There is a logical relationship between its two halves, and while Schrader does little to emphasize this relationship, it emerges despite *Blue Collar's* slickness. We see this initially with the robbery, which, while funny at times, is finally shown to be a desperate act by men whose only way of changing their lives is either to turn political or outlaw.

The same political logic also applies to the role the union and the FBI play in *Blue Collar*. The union, like Smokey, Jerry, and Zeke, acts more than anything else on the basis of what it regards as its own political limits. A confrontation between Zeke and the head of his local, "Knuckles" Johnson (Harry Bellaver), brings this home. Johnson does not deny the union's loan-sharking or its ties with the mob. What he claims is that this kind of compromise has enabled the union to get to a position where it could do good for blacks and other workers. It is an argument that, given what we have seen of the union in action, is not convincing, but it does nonetheless provide us with some insight. We see how the union defends itself to its members, and we see how difficult it is for Zeke, who knows he is being bought off with a promotion to shop steward, to find an alternative framework to operate in.

The meeting between Jerry and the FBI is equally pointed. In contrast to the meeting between Zeke and "Knuckles" Johnson, which takes place on a bridge overlooking the freeway into Detroit, the meeting between Jerry and the FBI occurs on a bridge by the Detroit River. The setting is almost bucolic. Gone are the speeding cars and giant Goodyear clock (clicking out the minutes and auto production) from the earlier scene. Yet the contrast is ironic. The FBI, which is trying to get evidence against Jerry's local, is in its way as ruthless as his union. Its agent (Cliff de Young) makes no effort to persuade Jerry that what he is doing is right. He simply tells Jerry that protection and a new identity from the FBI provide the only chance he has for survival, and Jerry, realizing he is trapped, agrees to reveal what he knows about his union's illegal loans.

In context these scenes are not enough to change the gangster-picture mood of the second half of *Blue Collar,* but they do keep it from being overwhelming, and they lead directly to the final scene of *Blue Collar* in which Zeke and Jerry, each feeling betrayed, turn on each other. As the picture stops in a freeze frame, we get a voice-over of Smokey repeating what he said earlier, "Everything they do, the way they pit the lifers against the new boys, the

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old against the young, the black against the white, is meant to keep us in our place." At this point what could be drug-store Marxism appears instead as an earned didacticism, and we are carried back to the fact that what turns Smokey, Jerry, and Zeke into the "Oreo Gang" is what could also lead to their politicalization.

BY COMPARISON with *Blue Collar, F.I.S.T.* seems relentlessly determined to go the union-crime-exploitation route, and as if to emphasize this intention, it carries with it a set of characters who are strikingly reminiscent of those of *On the Waterfront*. In place of Marlon Brando as Terry Malloy, we have Sylvester Stallone as Johnny Kovak, a Cleveland warehouse worker; instead of Eva Marie Saint as the poor-but-genteel girl he loves, we have Melinda Dillon as Anna Zerinkas, a poor-but-proud glove-maker; and instead of Karl Malden as Father Barrie, Terry's conscience, we have David Huffman as Abe Belkin, Johnny's adopted brother and conscience.

Yet *F.I.S.T.* does not fall into the *On the Waterfront* pattern. Just as the first half of *Blue Collar* is an indoor picture preoccupied with the psychology of being an autoworker, so the first half of *F.I.S.T.* is an outdoor picture, showing how a man like Johnny Kovak rises (in Jimmy Hoffa fashion) from a warehouse man to an organizer, to a union president with uneasy ties to the mob. From the start it is not Johnny's uniqueness that we are shown so much as his larger-than-life typicality. He emerges as the leader of a wildcat strike only after we have seen a group of men clambering for a job in the warehouse where he works and only after we have seen the abusive treatment they receive from their foreman. It is this pattern that dominates *F.I.S.T.* We are aware of the need for Johnny to act long before he is, and we see those around him—friends and enemies—realize that his ability to be a larger version of the men he works with is what makes him a leader.

Johnny's wildcat strike gets him fired, and he becomes an organizer for F.I.S.T. (Federation of Interstate Truckers) only because an organizer for F.I.S.T. sees that he "has a way with the men" and offers him the free use of a car (which allows him to court Anna). It is not until the Consolidated Trucking Company, which he is trying to organize, puts pressure on him, first by trying to hire him, then by having him beaten up, that Johnny begins to realize what he has gotten into—and even this realization is limited. When he finally gets a strike going at Consolidated, Johnny assumes that, if the men stick together, the company will have to negotiate with them. He never anticipates what happens: an attack on the strikers by company-paid thugs of the Law and Order League and collusion by the police.

Once this occurs, Johnny becomes a changed man, and at the funeral of the organizer who brought him into F.I.S.T., Johnny makes an alliance with a local mobster, Vince Doyle (Kevin Conway), who all along has insisted that what Johnny needed was "push." The alliance is the turning point for Johnny and for F.I.S.T., and in a crowd scene that parallels the union's first clash with the Law and Order League, F.I.S.T. with the aid of the mob routs Consolidated's goons and inflicts enough damage on the company to persuade its owners to sign a contract. The first half of *F.I.S.T.* then closes on a note of triumph. Johnny marries Anna and acquires the "push" he needs to break any company and bring F.I.S.T. through the depression. The only questioning note is raised by Abe Belkin, who protests that F.I.S.T. is going to be corrupted by the mob; but his protest lacks force. Abe is unable to show that the mob is not necessary for dealing with companies like Consolidated.

The second half of *F.I.S.T.* begins as we are taken (through a whirling pan shot) from the dancing at Johnny's wedding to Washington in 1959, and with this transition a whole new set of problems begins. The labor struggles that took place two decades earlier in the industrial flats of Cleveland are now centered in the national offices of F.I.S.T. and the corridors of the Senate. Johnny's alliance with the mob, his rise to president of F.I.S.T., his insistence on getting a national contract for his drivers have brought him new problems. More and more of his union's pension funds are now tied to the mob's Las Vegas casinos, and when his friend Abe (still uncorrupted) leads his West Coast local on a wildcat strike, it is Johnny who gives the order to break the strike. The result is Johnny's further estrangement from Abe, and when Senator Cole Madison (Rod Steiger), Chairman of the Senate Rackets Committee, asks Abe for information on F.I.S.T.'s ties with the underworld, Abe reluctantly supplies it. *F.I.S.T.* ends with Johnny being brought before the Committee, and the mob choosing to protect itself, first by killing Abe, then by killing Johnny.

Like the second half of *Blue Collar,* the second half of *F.I.S.T.* resists easy interpretation. We are not thrown into a world in which big is bad and unions, like all organizations, are assumed to be exclusively self-serving. In his appearance before the Senate Rackets Committee, Johnny is unable to deny any of the specific charges leveled against

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him. All he can do is shout at Senator Madison, "What the hell do you know about anything?" But his accusation does not seem misplaced. Madison's disdain for Johnny's past, his inability to understand his ties with the mob seem middle-class pieties in the context of the first half of *F.I.S.T.*, and by the film's end it is clear that, if the only choice is between Madison's legalistic world and Johnny's grey world, the grey world is preferable in terms of the social justice it promises.

FINALLY, what is perhaps most surprising of all about *Blue Collar* and *F.I.S.T.* is that in 1978 they should have been made at all. For they do much more than break with the previous ways Hollywood has dealt with labor unions. In a period in which the suffering of the genteel protagonists of *Annie Hall* and *An Unmarried Woman* is increasingly what creates movie interest, they argue implicitly that sophistication is the capacity to transform the brutal, and at a time when "small is beautiful" is the basis for an attack on everything from welfare to architecture, they insist that it is not size so much as our distance from day-to-day experience that is undoing us. They even put the great horror of the sixties—political killing—in a perspective it has rarely had in the media, showing it as an option that to some will always be tempting when institutional structures are so shaky that they can be changed or preserved by the assassination of a few men. □

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Dennis H. Wrong

Looking Back at McCarthyism

THE GREAT FEAR: THE ANTI-COMMUNIST PURGE UNDER TRUMAN AND EISENHOWER IN AMERICA AFTER WORLD WAR II, by David Caute. New York: Simon & Schuster (London: Secker & Warburg). 697 pp. $14.95.

Few historical judgments appear so unassailable as the almost universal condemnation of the harassment inflicted on Americans accused of Communist sympathies barely a quarter of a century ago. Only a few isolated sectarians on the far right today revere the memory of Senator Joseph McCarthy, whose name has become the identifying tag for the period and a synonym for extreme and mendacious attacks on political opponents. The other day my local newspaper published a cartoon depicting the ghostly likeness of Senator McCarthy emerging from a cupboard carrying a pot of paint bearing the name of Proposition 6, the antihomosexual referendum in the state of California. Even conservative Republicans, when their probity is questioned, are apt to accuse their critics of resorting to "McCarthyite smears" or succumbing to "left-wing McCarthyism"—Nixon's defenders at the time of Watergate are a case in point.

David Caute is too young to have personally experienced the period. He writes in *The Great Fear* as a historian primarily concerned to document in detail the ways in which suspected Communists were victimized in a wide range of sectors of American society. He has explored several unpublished collections of documents, including correspondence and records of interviews with victims of the purge. Caute himself has interviewed a number of people both famous (such as Alger Hiss) and obscure, consulted records of court proceedings as well as the published minutes of the American Civil Liberties Union and the files of several state and local "loyalty" commissions, and read most of the scholarly, autobiographical, and journalistic writings on the subject.

Far from concentrating on the publicized cases of top government officials and the already well-aired events in the universities and the entertainment industry, Caute also surveys the activities of state and local inquisitorial bodies, municipal police "red squads," and private vigilante groups that hounded people of modest resources—New York City schoolteachers, workers in defense plants, and city parks employees—while using even less defensible definitions of "disloyalty" and of the occupations to which it was conceivably relevant than the notorious congressional committees and federal agencies. Caute does not overlook the mean-minded persecution of aliens by the Immigration Service (chiefly in the form of deportation, denaturalization, or the threat of them), of drafted soldiers by the Army, and of passport holders or applicants and prospective foreign visitors by the State Department Passport Office controlled by McCarthyites.

Caute tries to arrive at rough statistical summaries of how many people were charged under various anti-Communist statutes or executive orders and of how many actually suffered the loss of jobs and various civil rights as a result. Many cases were ultimately dismissed by the courts. For example, only 163 of over 300 persons arrested for deportation were actually deported and only 13 persons were denaturalized—but, of course, even those who won their court battles suffered burdensome material and psychic costs.

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Caute is thoroughly knowledgeable about the difference between inveterate followers of the Communist party line and independent liberals and radicals: he previously published a study of Communism and the French intellectuals as well as a highly praised account of fellow-travelers in Europe and America during the years of the Popular Front. While deploring the symbolic uses made of the cases of Hiss and the Rosenbergs, and of the death penalty inflicted on the latter, he reserves judgment about their guilt or innocence, although the tenor of his remarks suggests that he would be rather more surprised if definitive evidence turned up proving their innocence than the reverse. (Allen Weinstein's research on the Hiss case was not fully available to him at the time of writing.)

CAUTE PLACES little credence in the view, proclaimed by Communists at the time and echoed by many radical young people in the following decade, that the purge represented a turn toward "fascism" engineered by the "ruling class." Finding its roots in party politics rather than in the hidden designs of corporate elites, he crisply notes at the outset the immense difference in scale between the American violations of civil liberties and the Nazi and Fascist (also Soviet) tyrannies to which it has often been likened in the more hyperbolic rhetoric of the left. A few thousand people lost their jobs, a few hundred were imprisoned, but nobody except the Rosenbergs lost their lives. The courts did not escape contamination by the moral ignominy of the period, but they did set definite limits and eventually acted so as to bring the entire enterprise into disrepute. The press self-protectively avoided defending the rights of actual Communists such as the party leaders indicted under the Smith Act, but leading newspapers spotlighted the absurd injustices bureaucratically inflicted upon innocent people for misconstrued conventional liberal opinions or for mere personal associations, often in the remote past.

As one who followed the whole shabby undertaking fairly closely, I am in fact surprised at how many of the activities and individual cases reported by Caute were widely and critically discussed in the press at the time: the young Coast Guard cadet denied an officer's commission for having maintained the family association with his accused mother, the pregnant war bride detained on Ellis Island for three years, the Trotskyist legless war veteran fired from his clerical job with the Veterans' Administration—I well remember their names anc the details of their various plights. There are probably not very many unexamined sources left to provide a fuller account of the anti-Communist campaign than Caute's, and doubts about some highly placed individuals such as Harry Dexter White may never be resolved. In contrast to his documentation, however, Caute's evaluations and interpretations are often perfunctory and slipshod. He confines himself to a scant three pages of formal "conclusions," in which he correctly insists that the most significant and determining larger historical facts about the purge are that it occurred just a few years after the Second World War when the Democrats had been in control of the presidency for 15 years. Yet, throughout the book and especially in the two opening chapters, Caute strains for an assessment possessing greater political "relevance" today by seeking to locate the roots of the evils of McCarthyism, Vietnam, and Watergate in the decisions and conflicts of the late 1940s that set the American course in the postwar world. This has become a rather popular line nowadays, with a spate of memoirs by aging former Communists or near-Communists picturing themselves as far-sighted early opponents both of an American foreign policy that came to grief in Vietnam and of such disgraced right-wing politicians as Nixon and McCarthy.

Caute's biases are of more recent vintage, stemming from the revisionism of the defunct New Left. These biases also predispose him to extend his indictment of the past beyond the deeds of Senator McCarthy and those who remained silent about them out of cowardice or expediency. He means his indictment to embrace the authors of the policy of resistance to Soviet expansionism under the Truman administration and those who opposed the Communists in liberal-labor organizations and journals before anti-Communism became a national cause exploited by demagogues and political racketeers. Speaking of the old anti-Stalinist left, he makes ample use of the slippery label "Cold War Liberals," so indiscriminately wielded by those who claimed to look back in anger in the late 1960s. Caute's language has a hit-and-run quality in view of his failure to justify the judgments it implies. Sometimes he seems anxious merely to signal to certain readers that he has the correct sentiments by suddenly using a Marxist term or two; sometimes he falls into the clichés of the 1960s, which occasionally involve him in anachronisms when it comes to understanding much earlier events.

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ONE CAN, to begin with, take exception to both Caute's title and his subtitle. His opening sentence reads:

> The great fear, like the threat of upheaval and expropriation that inspires it, has been a recurrent phenomenon in the history of the bourgeoisie since the French Revolution. It has occurred in France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United States, but not in exactly the same form.

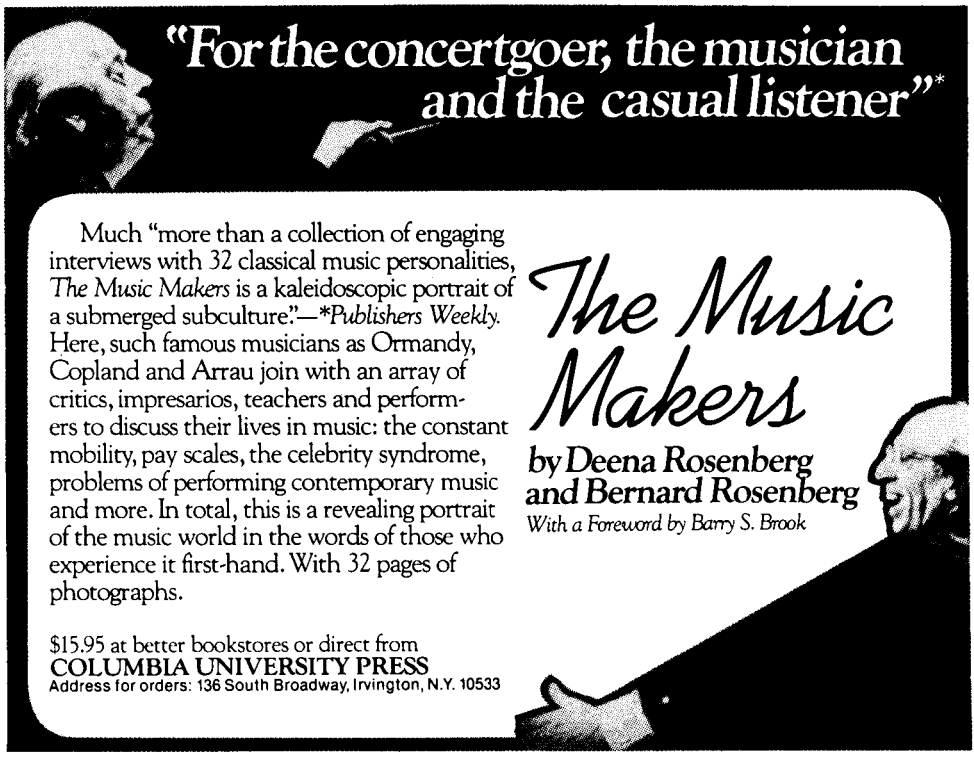
We hear, perhaps fortunately, little more about this almost infinitely protean bourgeoisie, but such psychological terms as "mass anxiety," "hysteria," "security mania," and "collective paranoia" have dominated discussions of the anti-Communist purge since its very beginnings. Obviously, their import is that the American public was seized with an irrational fear of domestic Communism.

Yet, much of Caute's evidence compels us to wonder just who is supposed to have been afraid of whom. Citing a purge victim's conclusion that "we have accepted fear as our supreme master," he shrewdly remarks that:

> this was a charitable view of politicians, bureaucrats, and petty officials whose behavior was arbitrary and corrupt. The essential corruption was to protect and conceal flimsy, hearsay rumors, the tittle-tattle of paid or otherwise interested informers, by which the Immigration Service was manured, and to do so under the bogus mask of national security.

This judgment has wider application than to the Immigration Service, as Caute's accounts of other public and private agencies fully attest. He also refers to opinion polls (reported in Samuel Stouffer's 1955 book, *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties*), showing that only tiny minorities throughout the period spontaneously mentioned Communist subversion as something they "worried about." Insignificantly larger ones gave higher priority to the "threat" of internal Communism over more familiar concerns such as economic problems or world peace when asked specifically about public issues.

One doubts whether the politicians, leaders of patriotic associations, and columnists and editors who rallied behind Senator McCarthy really feared a Communist revolution. Most of them obviously saw in the Cold War a God-sent opportunity to associate the New Deal, the liberal wing of the Democratic party, racial equality, internationalism, labor unions, and a host of other things they opposed with the national enemy. No doubt, some rightists hated these things with an irrational passion, but, apart from special concerns over Soviet espionage, there cannot have been very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many people who were truly frightened by Communists in the United States.

Fear of the purgers, on the other hand, can scarcely be dismissed as a hysterical reaction. There were those, to be sure, who exaggerated the power of McCarthy and his allies for ideological reasons, and a few people still do so retrospectively to justify their silence at the time. Others—more numerous in my impression—engaged in such exaggeration (and some still do) in order to make their highly vocal opposition appear more courageous than it was.

In many areas of American life, especially government service, the press, and the craven entertainment and advertising industries, real risks were run in speaking out. Caute is hard on those who voiced their outrage only when anti-Communists or obvious apolitical innocents were attacked, sometimes with justice as when no more than cushy Hollywood jobs were at stake. Yet, people in politics, government, the press and—perhaps especially—people in trade union leadership positions had grave responsibilities for others, and this often dictated their cautious attitude rather than hypocrisy or unprincipled self-interest.

There is a clear inconsistency in holding that the purge was a fearsome and near-successful fascist assault on American liberties while at the same time righteously denouncing people who were less than heroic in opposing it, including liberal intellectuals who merely declined to give it exclusive attention among their political concerns. Caute does not quite take this position—though some of his informants and sources have done so—but his failure to discriminate among the feared, the fearful, and the fearsome makes him at times appear at least to flirt with it.

CAUTE'S SUBTITLE is meant to minimize the role of Senator McCarthy by attributing greater responsibility for the purge to the policies and personnel of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. McCarthy's sheer brazen rascality exercised a kind of snake-and-bird fascination over many of us, and he continues to assume outsize proportions in recollections of the period. Moreover, he was indeed a latecomer in 1950 to the Communist-hunting charade, relying initially on old and discredited charges and on lists of people investigated several years earlier. Caute argues that "McCarthy's objective historical role was a healthy one" because his excesses exposed the fraudulence of the issue and compelled respectable politicians who had tolerated him to abandon the absurd logic of the purge in at last restraining him. There is some truth in this, but no one who lived through those years can quite see McCarthy in that light: it's too much like (allowing for the difference in scale) the claim that Hitler played a "healthy historical role" because his actions finally discredited Prussian militarism.

I remember in the early '50s standing at the still point of a churning Washington cocktail party and hearing "McCarthy, McCarthy, McCarthy" resound off the walls. By Caute's own reckoning, the anti-Communist campaign lasted from early 1947 to late 1954 when McCarthy's censure by the Senate was the beginning of the end, although it took about another year for the changed mood to take effect in the boondocks. McCarthy, in short, was the personal incarnation of the purge for fully five of its eight years, a fact that is obscured by Caute's organization of his book into separate sections dealing with the various areas of American society affected rather than in chronological sequence. If McCarthy's repudiation by the Senate ended it all, his apparently charmed political life intensified the purge during the two years in which the Eisenhower administration blatantly appeased him despite his own unimpressive reelection victory in 1952.

"It was the Truman administration that manured the soil from which the prickly cactus called McCarthy suddenly and awkwardly shot up." Caute's prose is undistinguished but this is an exceptionally bad example—the metaphor doesn't even work, for prickly cactus grows in sand. What of the judgment? Following the 1946 elections in which the Republicans won control of Congress for the first time since 1930, Truman established a loyalty commission, the first piece of bureaucratic machinery charged solely with investigating the political allegiances of federal civil servants. His aim was to divert Republican attacks on alleged Communists in government by the House Un-American Affairs Committee, attacks inspired by the Canadian Royal Commission, which had first revealed major Soviet espionage rings in the United States and Britain as well as in Canada and also by the ambiguous but inconsequential *Amerasia* case. Besides, Truman had wished to keep the FBI under J. Edgar Hoover, whom he disliked and distrusted, out of the picture, but he failed to achieve this aim.

The order creating the loyalty program was issued only nine days after the presentation to Congress of the proposals that came to be known as the Truman Doctrine, regarded then as now as the first decisive American political and military commitment in what was already being called the

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"Cold War." Here we arrive at the crux of the matter, for the entire eight-year assault on suspected domestic Communists rested on the false conflation of the internal and external threats. Truman wished to defuse agitation over the former, which he regarded as nasty partisan politicking, in order to gain Republican support for his policies to cope with the latter. Caute contends that the "seeds of McCarthyism were sown . . . [by] the style—tactical and rhetorical—of Truman's immersion in the Cold War." He says he wishes to shun "the intractable debate over who 'caused' the Cold War" and observes only that Britain also opposed the Soviet Union while avoiding anything like the American crusade against native Communists. Many of us looked wistfully at the British example and repeatedly invoked it at the time, but Britain, after all, was abandoning rather than assuming a leading role in world politics. Caute even neglects to mention that the Truman Doctrine arose precisely out of the British inability to continue aid to Greece and Turkey, which had been assumed as an obligation at Yalta.

Truman's anti-Communist rhetoric was extravagant, but it was intended to arouse a population that had just a few years earlier responded to similar rhetoric in supporting the greatest foreign war in American history against a dictatorial regime whose conduct at home and abroad did not differ so strikingly from that of the Soviet state. Onetime isolationists were able to adapt the Truman administration's anti-Communist foreign policy to their own domestic "politics of revenge" against the New Deal and the Second World War, as well as to make use of and imitate on state and local levels the government's loyalty program.

But the "seeds of McCarthyism" would have dried up without the "manuring" they received from Stalin. The years 1948 and 1949 alone witnessed the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, the Berlin blockade, the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Soviet bloc, the frame-up trials of national Communists in Eastern Europe, and the persecutions of Jews in Russia itself. Caute is not writing a history of the Cold War, but it is quite a feat to discuss the origins of McCarthyism without so much as mentioning the impact of these events. For that matter, McCarthy himself was beginning to be perceived as the transparent faker he was a few months after his national debut as a red-hunter, until the North Korean invasion of South Korea involved the United States in its first unpopular and undeclared war in Asia and altered the domestic political landscape.

MY MEMORIES of the period are influenced by the fact that I had at least a worms-eye insider's view of the top State Department officials and the leading foreign diplomats in Washington. My father was Canadian ambassador to the United States for all but the first year or so of the Truman administration, a post he held so long because he and Dean Acheson were old personal friends. I myself served in 1951-52 as a research assistant to George Kennan at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, a stint that was cut short when Truman appointed Kennan ambassador to the Soviet Union. Thus I had many opportunities to hear the chief architects of American postwar policy toward Russia discuss informally what they thought they were doing. The language Caute uses to describe their designs and motives induces a shock of nonrecognition, as does that of the revisionist historians from whom he borrows much of it.

I never heard any of these men expatiate on the "menace of international Communism," although they talked a good deal about Russian power. They were less than intimately familiar (except, of

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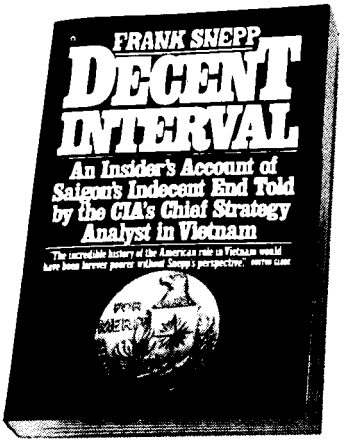
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course, for Kennan) with the tortured history of the Soviet Union, which perhaps is why they continued to regard Alger Hiss with sympathy even after, as we learn from Allen Weinstein, he had been eased out of the State Department as a suspected Communist agent long before he came to the attention of HUAC.

The men who advised Truman were constantly mindful of the appeasement and unpreparedness in the years before the Second World War and also had firm memories of the American rejection of the League of Nations and retreat into isolationism after the First World War, the period in which most of them had begun their own careers. I never heard them speak of any necessity to expand and secure "free enterprise" or "capitalism" on a worldwide basis, nor even of American overseas trade needs. Caute finds "indisputable" a statement by Robert Heilbroner that "It is, I think, the fear of losing our place in the sun, of finding ourselves at bay, that motivated a great deal of anti-Communism on which so much of our foreign policy seems to be founded." Heilbroner, however, wrote this in 1967 with reference to the war in Vietnam. Twenty years earlier the "place in the sun" had scarcely yet been secured.

The men responsible for the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NATO may very well have wryly and ironically acknowledged that what they were doing was creating a "pax Americana"—a favorite term of Caute's—in the bipolar postwar world. These men never spoke complacently of "the American Century" or indulged in such a thing as an "American Celebration," two other terms Caute reiterates with derisive intent throughout his book. Here too his lack of a sure sense of the time is apparent: "the American Century" was a phrase much favored by Henry Luce early in the Second World War, but even the Luce publications dropped it after the war, presumably because they recognized its offensive jingoistic overtones now that old-style isolationism was dead. Quite possibly, the slogan was first suggested to Luce by a member of the active Communist cell at *Time* and *Fortune*: the Communists went in heavily for patriotic rhetoric during the Popular Front years, "Communism is 20th-Century Americanism" being only their most notorious slogan. "American Celebration," on the other hand, was a jibe used first by C. Wright Mills in the 1950s aimed, not at most Americans who never needed much excuse to celebrate America, but at ex-radical intellectuals who had become more conservative in response to the Cold War.

But how policy was conceived by those who made it and how it was publicly presented are two different things. I remember a visit with my parents to Acheson's farm in Maryland on a hot summer night in either 1947 or 1948, a time when Acheson was out of the government, he thought for good. Musing reflectively on the limits of power, he gave as an example Senator Vandenberg's famous—or infamous—advice to "scare hell out of the American people" in order to obtain Republican congressional support for the Truman Doctrine. Not the way we had wanted to present it, said Acheson even before the anti-Communist purge had started, but we felt we had no choice. A few years later, Acheson voiced his profound regret over the creation of the loyalty program and accepted full responsibility as a member of the Truman administration for the contribution it made to the erosion of civil liberties. However, in his memoirs, *Present at the Creation*, the closest Acheson comes to questioning the administration's foreign-policy decisions is to observe that "it may be true" that "we overreacted to Stalin, which in turn caused him to overreact to policies of the United States." Kennan, as is well-known, thought even before 1951 that the policy of containment he had done so much to shape had been overextended and interpreted in too military a fashion.

Unfortunately, David Caute never distinguishes clearly between the foreign-policy decisions, how they were publicly presented and what relation they bore to the treatment of domestic Communists, which, despite his disclaimer about the origins of the Cold War, gives the impression that he condemns all of these together as malign and avoidable causes of the anti-Communist purge that is his primary subject.

One grows old, one indulges in anecdotes. I shall surrender to the temptation by relating the events of a single afternoon that sum up for me the pain and moral ambiguity of the period.

One June day in 1953 my mother and I decided to use the visitors' passes regularly supplied us through the kindness of Justice Frankfurter to attend a session of the Supreme Court. The full court was expected to meet that day to decide on the order delaying the execution of the Rosenbergs issued by Justice Douglas a few days before. As we waited in the courtroom, a wealthy liberal family friend introduced me to a lawyer who, he proudly told me, had once been associated with the Tom Mooney defense team and who believed that the Rosenberg case represented a comparable travesty of justice. Settled in our seats, we could hear a few

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rows in front of us a famous Washington personality, the daughter of a former president, proclaim loudly that she hoped the court would get the damn thing over with, put Justice Douglas in his place, and send the Rosenbergs to their proper destination.

The afternoon dragged on, the justices did not appear, and my mother went home. Finally, a clerk announced that the court would not meet that day. In the rotunda I met a French woman with whom I had gone to school in Europe before the war. She had been a heroine of the French Resistance, and I knew that she and her husband were Communist sympathizers. He was the U.S. correspondent for a Paris newspaper and she had come down from New York with a delegation accompanying Emanuel Bloch, the Rosenberg's lawyer. She demanded to know what I thought about the case and, without waiting for an answer, passionately declared it to be a monstrous injustice, "America's Dreyfus case," and, worse, "fascism come to life again—how could Americans do this?" I eventually managed to say that I thought the Rosenbergs were guilty as charged but that I was horrified and appalled by the dealth penalty.

As I walked down the steps of the Supreme Court building, Emanuel Bloch came out of the front door behind me. A group of press photographers suddenly appeared, clicking and flashing their cameras in the late afternoon sunlight. As I reached the foot of the steps, a large car pulled up to the curb and a handsome, well-dressed woman of middle age got out and asked me what was happening. I told her and, her face contorted, she shouted "I hope those lousy bastards fry. The chair is really too good for the rats. They ought to lock up their lawyers too." When I muttered a demurral, she screamed "People like you are just what we don't need in this country." At dinner, I told my parents what had happened and how much it depressed me. My father, tired from overwork on the Korean peace negotiations and suffering, though we didn't yet know it, from the illness that was to end his life in less than a year, reacted impatiently, dismissing the matter as of minor importance. □

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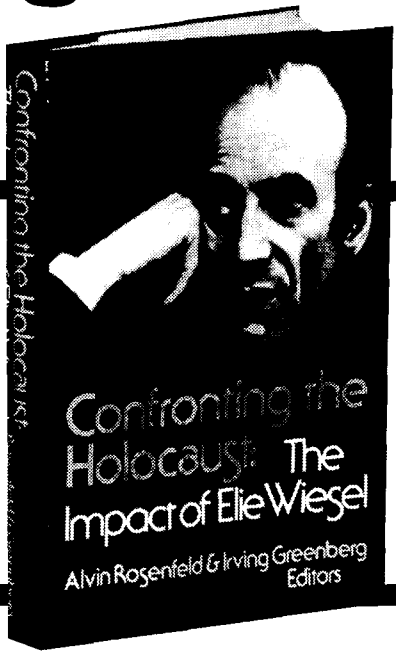

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Randall Kennedy

Factory Workers in a "Workers' State"

A WORKER IN A WORKERS' STATE: PIECE-RATES IN HUNGARY, by Miklos Haraszti. London: Penguin Books. 175 pp. 85 pence.

This book is Miklos Haraszti's account of his experiences in 1972 as a machinist in the Red Star tractor factory in Budapest, Hungary. It vividly portrays the degradation of work in what is supposedly a socialist workers' state.

Haraszti reports that Hungarian factory life is characterized by "coercion, dependence and obedience." The immediate cause of distress lay in the factory's replication of a capitalist organization of labor, or, more precisely, payment by "piece rates." Working for piece rates means ostensibly that workers are paid according to the quantity of their output. But as they naturally increase their speed of production, the norms stipulating the time it should take to complete various tasks are continually revised downward by the bureaucrats who run the factories. To recoup losses, laborers constantly speed up work, which in turn causes further downward revisions. The more one works the less that work is worth. From such a system, writes Haraszti, "Sisyphus could have learned a thing or two."

Like his comrades, Haraszti furiously attempts to keep apace with the incessantly rising level of production. This futile effort turns taxing but nonetheless potentially enjoyable work into a physically debilitating activity empty of all mental or spiritual pleasure. At the end of the day, it leaves him "desperate, in a cold sweat, with a trembling stomach." It dulls his mind. Evoking its stupefying effects Haraszti writes: "When a thought materializes, against all odds, it cannot break loose. It is snapped up by the rhythm, and turns round, like a caged squirrel in a treadmill." Work organized and imposed from above creates human automatons. "In the end," he bitterly complains, "the only way out is to become a machine."

Many other humiliations daily attend the lives of Hungarian workers. By law Hungarians must carry workbooks listing previous places of employment, wages earned, and reasons for leaving. Perhaps even more insulting are the informal practices that reflect the paternalism of the political culture. Without permission from their foremen, workers at the Red Star are not allowed to change clothes, to turn on lights, to arrive before or stay after working hours. Nor can they turn to their unions for effective aid. "The union is our paid enemy," remarks one worker. "They [sic] would be the first to send for the police if there were a strike."

Bereft of organized protection, the Red Star's workers are reduced to an atomized mass. Everyone is on his own in a four-cornered fight against machines, time, bosses, and worst of all, one's fellow workers. Rate fixers are pitted against machinists in an especially cruel way, since they determine the norms that dictate the speed of work. Describing this clash, Haraszti observes that rate fixers'

> stop watches tick away with real zeal: their promotions depend on it. Sharp eyes, firmness, an absolute insensitivity to the evidence of the wound they are inflicting on the enemy: those are the qualities rate fixers need. "Maintaining the norms" is a battle.

IN THE WAR, words as well as vulnerable paychecks become weapons. Workers almost always use "them" as a shorthand expression for management, but never use the "us" that signifies the countervailing power to their exploitation. Instead, "us" is appropriated by the directing elite and used to disguise conflict and to speak on behalf of the entire factory "community." These stratagems prove futile; the workers are not fooled. Yet their consciousness strays little beyond this merely negative awareness. Instead of aspiring to control the workplaces where they daily invest their bodies, minds, and souls, workers narrowly concern themselves with mere squabbles over what can only euphemistically be called "fair wages." Perhaps overstating the point, Haraszti compares his comrades to natives

> who in the early days of colonialism handed over everything, their treasures, their land, and themselves, for worthless trinkets and who became aware that they had been robbed only when they failed to get the usual junk in return.

Haraszti rightly insists that neither technology nor efficiency in themselves dictate the subjugation of workers to alienating labor or externally imposed discipline. What transforms technology into a dire enemy are the aims to which it is put. When used to extract maximum output in exchange for minimum pay, technology enters the class war and becomes yet another victim of

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needless waste. Haraszti recalls, for example, how he and his fellow workers sabotaged new technology to protect themselves from the ever increasing rigors of labor and reductions in pay.

IN HIS most moving chapter, Haraszti describes the liberating possibilities uncovered when workers defy regulations to make, simply for their own pleasure, gadgets and ornaments known as "homers." Making "homers" brings out the best in the workers. Most factory friendships begin with this illicit activity. Self-destructive cynicism gives way to the inspiration of meaningful labor and pride in good craftsmanship. Because they are left to their own initiative and discipline, workers bring to their production of "homers" hidden potentials for creativity, skill, and efficiency. Neither money nor utility accounts for the risks and pains they take. Involved instead is an incentive that, to Haraszti, is "stronger than all others: the conviction that our labour, our life and our consciousness can be governed by our own goals."

Haraszti's sometimes lyrical tribute to "homers" is, however, but a momentary respite from the gloom that overhangs *A Worker*. Despair abruptly descends when he again turns his attention to those forces that chase "homers" and all they represent to the fringes of working life:

> The day will come [he avers] when homers are no longer forbidden but are commercialized and administered. . . . Then, no one will suspect that homers were originally more than a "do-it-yourself" hobby . . . that they once showed through factory controls, the necessity of making a living, and the pressure of wages, as a surrogate for something which by then perhaps will be even more impossible to name than it is today.

THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT SO successfully intimidated social criticism that Haraszti could find no publisher willing to handle his manuscript. When *Szociologia*, a major Hungarian social science review, eventually agreed to print extracts, the police were alerted and Haraszti was arrested. The authorities prosecuted him for writing a book likely to stimulate "hatred of the State." He was convicted, fined, and given a suspended jail sentence. *Index on Censorship* reports that during the past year Haraszti has twice been denied a visa to travel abroad.

By writing with such impassioned and clear-sighted honesty about the betrayal of Hungarian workers, Haraszti allows socialists to see more clearly certain pitfalls to be avoided in the long march to a new world. One is the danger involved in slighting problems concerning work and its organization. This is sometimes a tendency of revolutionaries in underdeveloped countries preoccupied with "catching up" with Western capitalism, and of other radicals who view socialism merely as a more equitable way of distributing goods. But as Haraszti avers, it is at the workplace that servitude begins and there that liberation must extend, if humankind is to be truly free. The other trap illuminated by both *A Worker* and its suppression was memorably warned against by I. F. Stone in response to Hungary's revolution in 1956:

> No condescending stereotypes about "bourgeois democracy" can hide the great lessons of events—the worker needs the secret ballot, the opposition party, "due process" of law and the free press as much under socialism as under capitalism. Otherwise he has merely changed bosses. □

Murray Hausknecht

Work Time, Schmooze Time

TEN THOUSAND WORKING DAYS, by Robert Schrank. Cambridge: MIT Press. 243 pp. $12.50.

At first glance this is another history of "making it" in America: Robert Schrank, son of immigrant parents, leaves school during the Depression at age 14 to take an unskilled laborer's job in a furniture factory, and then works his way through life as a plumber's helper, does a stint as a farmhand, an auto mechanic, union organizer, skilled machinist, union official, middle-level manager in private industry, a staffer with Mobilization for Youth during the War on Poverty, an assistant commissioner in the Lindsay administration, and, finally, a philanthropoid with the Ford Foundation. Along the way he acquires a college education and a Ph.D. in sociology. But it is an American success story with some differences.

It is a story concerned almost exclusively with work, "with what goes on" in the kinds of jobs Schrank has had. Those experiences were con-

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ditioned by a close relationship with his father, an anarcho-syndicalist and admirer of the IWW, and by growing up in an atmosphere of class-consciousness and socialist ideologies. What we have, then, is a report on the world of work from someone whose direct knowledge of that world is filtered through both a leftist political consciousness and a familiarity with the scholarly research on work. Although he tells us nothing very new or startling, he is well worth listening to because we seldom get a reporter with Schrank's combination of characteristics.

Like others who have worked in factories or observed factory work, he finds that there is no "joy in work" there; standing on an assembly line or tending a machine is mind-numbing and soul-destroying. The skilled worker is not much better off. Schrank once worked with a machinist who kept a generating plant's steam engines in repair. Since the engines were not mass-produced and replacement parts had to be made to fit the idiosyncracies of each engine, there were some opportunities then for "creativity" and intrinsic satisfactions. But today a skilled toolmaker, for example, must follow the specifications drawn up for him by engineers. This required skill now consists largely of the ability to work to the exceedingly fine tolerances modern machinery demands; the worker's skill is not related to a craft situation that enables him to transcend the alienating influences of modern technology.

But, of course, workers do not expect a job to be enjoyable, interesting, or intrinsically satisfying. They look for more extrinsic satisfactions; a good job is one with satisfactory material returns in the shape of wages, hours, working conditions, and fringe benefits. Part of the definition of good working conditions is the extent to which workers can *escape* from the job, i.e., the formal requirements that strictly bind the worker to his task and force him to concentrate solely on production. Escaping from the job means evading those constraints and seeking the satisfactions that come from socializing with others. Schrank uses the Yiddish term "schmooze" to describe the opportunity to enjoy the simple pleasures of companionship with others. Opportunity to maximize schmooze time is an important aspect of tolerable jobs.

One difference between blue-collar and white-collar work is that in the former schmoozing, by definition, is "nonproductive"; schmooze time is time away from the task to be done. In white-collar work, especially at the managerial and professional levels, schmoozing is a part of the task. The three-martini business lunch is the prototypical example of "productive" schmoozing; the meetings and conferences that are regular features of bureaucratic life are other examples of how socializing with others is inextricably intertwined with the formal task. ("More and more we keep the Protestant ethic myth alive by the confusing of schmoozing and work.") Once manual workers have a chance to experience the difference between their situation and white-collar work, as happened with some who were involved with Mobilization for Youth, they became less willing to return to the shop floor.

Schmooze time must be carved out of the work situation, it is one result of a never-ending struggle on the factory floor. Schmoozing means beating the system, another way of not "busting your ass" for the boss or the company. It is not that workers want to avoid work or escape the requirements of the job completely, although Schrank notes that in an advanced welfare state like Sweden for people who have "dumb jobs, the option of welfare and not working becomes quite attractive." For the overwhelming majority of workers the issues are reasonable production goals and the pace of work, with the latter a frequent cause of wildcat strikes. Workers also attempt to maintain some control by "banking work," producing more than they turn in, hiding the excess, and using it to meet their quotas when they don't want to work too hard. The quotas workers fulfill are usually below management's maximum goals, and, consequently, factories are scenes of a kind of primitive class struggle. For example, in a Volvo truck assembly plant that has abandoned the usual assembly line for "autonomous work teams," Schrank found that workers stopped working an hour before the formal quitting time. They stopped when they reached the established quota of trucks for the day—31—and under no conditions would they even begin to work on the 32nd.

IN THIS STRUGGLE for a degree of autonomy in face of management's power, an important role is played by the sense of community that develops in work groups. Schrank suggests that academic observers tend to slight this aspect of factory life or, when they do notice it, see it from a management perspective as an impediment to production. Another key role is played by unions. Here Schrank is particularly valuable, for his own experience as a worker and organizer does not allow him to forget what is also frequently overlooked by academic researchers. His reports of organizing during the '30s and early '40s remind us that, cliché though it may be, unions were instrumental in restoring a sense of dignity to workers. Between the remnants of the New Left, on the one hand, and the neoconservatives longing for a capitalism that never existed, on the other, it is easy to forget how much more bearable jobs have become because of the unions. If the factory

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is not quite the chamber of horrors it used to be and if there is some job security, it is a consequence of unionization and not the workings of the invisible hand.

Schrank also discusses recent experiments with new forms of work organization. These experiments are designed to increase the workers' participation in decision-making on the shop floor. Yet, Schrank writes, in most instances these experiments were initiated by management without the participation of the workers or their union. On the other hand, he is aware that it takes a major effort to get workers and union officials to break through the bounds of conventional thinking. It is difficult to think in terms other than those of conventional hierarchical organization, and "the majority of work reorganization experiments are failing because they are not truly participatory." Everyone concerned, "managers, behavioral scientists, owners, and workers all know very little about *how* to organize insitutions in a way that makes them truly participative. We suffer from collective ignorance when it comes to this form of social action." To his list of those who don't know he could have added "socialists" for whom the problems of participation and control are or ought to be central. Schrank's book is a good starting point for those who wish to think about these issues. □

David Bromwich

Tribute to a Critic

LETTERS ON LITERATURE AND POLITICS 1912-1972, by Edmund Wilson. Selected and edited by Elena Wilson. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 768 pp. $20.

We are not likely to have a critic on the scale of Edmund Wilson ever again. He taught modernism, American literature, and "the writing and acting of history" to three generations of readers, and if his example as a journalist is not followed today, that is only because it seems too remote to aim for, either in the short run or the long. *That* learning, *that* unbridled curiosity, *that* integrity: in any other writer it would be sheer ostentation, would it not? He would be caught out, would he not? (The answers can be read in the career of Wilson's successor at the *New Yorker*.) Some of the posthumous reviewers, one cannot help noticing, have adopted a measured tone in writing of Wilson's achievement, as if there might be a way of scolding him tactfully. He was proud, willful, unyielding in argument, and filled with the hubris of the autodidact, notably in Russian matters; given to fits of spleen and flights of not always contagious whimsy; a revolutionary who never denied himself the aristocratic pleasure of giving offense; an apostle of the modern, to whom Mann, Kafka, and Lawrence were thoroughly resistible. The big boys who know all about Wilson's mistakes can afford to remember that Sainte-Beuve, the critic with whom for some reason he is most often compared, could hardly write a paragraph about his greatest contemporaries without striking a pose of casual disdain and wondering to himself: "Now, how far can I condescend to *him*?" Wilson never postured; when he issued a judgment, he showed his reasons; and his reasons always fitted him like a skin.

This is a wonderful selection of letters: one wants it not to end, and cheerfully forgives the misleading title ("literature and politics," but in truth most of the politics are literary). We have here the private opinions of a critic to whom forming opinions came as easily as breathing, and had about the same biological importance. The private views coincide with the public—how many critics could claim this now? who has not sold his soul to the blurb solicitor?—and they do not vary with the individual correspondent. Wilson's opinions are worth something in themselves: he records them in the heat of discovery, whenever he can find someone to dispatch them to, beginning in his prep-school days. He seems not to have passed through a phase of callow enthusiasms, and in a passage like the following on Boswell—very unfashionable, by the way, for an educated young gentleman of 1915—we already hear the mature author of *The Triple Thinkers* and *The Wound and the Bow*.

> Of course I don't think him an "utter ass," he was one of the greatest artists of his time. He shows much of the special talent of the novelist in writing biography. . . . Boswell was not only an artist: he was a Scotch artist, which means that he was governed by two things: a fascination in the glamour and charm of life, and a rigid conscience in telling the strict truth about it. I

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> wonder how far he realized what a marvelous portrait he was painting of himself. His Scotch honesty compelled him to tell the truth, even when his part was a ludicrous or mean one. He was the true creative genius, which always feels more than it knows.

OUT OF PRINCETON, and after three years of service—a time during which Wilson shared, from a distance, the sense of general waste that marked his whole generation—he settled in Greenwich Village and went to work for *Vanity Fair* and the *New Republic*. In retrospect, these would seem to him the glamour-years, but his letters make them appear drab and rather aimless. "I am going on *The New Republic* Monday," he writes to Stanley Dell. "They are really in quite a bad way. The magazine has become so dull that the editors themselves say they are unable to read it and the subscribers are dying off like flies." He finds all of the editors "curiously unattractive people," though each of them has confided in him separately, "taken me aside and told me that the rest of the staff were timid old maids." He concludes, not quite amused with either himself or his new project: "I'm going to do dramatic reviews and literary stuff. Read *The New Republic*." Except for an article on Mencken, he thinks nothing of his early work for the magazine, leaves it more or less apologetically—though not before lecturing Walter Lippmann on how to improve it—and then returns three years later as a regular writer. His renewed tenure at the magazine lasted most of two decades, and was certainly the high point of its literary department, from which the descent has been graceful in the '40s and '50s, and catastrophic in the '60s and '70s. Wilson had a hand in discovering R. P. Blackmur, Allen Tate, and Malcolm Cowley—an impressive plurality of the next generation's critics. He was a conscientious editor, making revisions, asking for clarifications, and when necessary saying no to his favorites; and he was in a position to do all this, because he was a better writer than any of the contributors.

Axel's Castle and *To the Finland Station* were the serious projects of the '20s and '30s. The first of these books seems to have occured to Wilson by chance, as a good way of lifting his frequent spells of depression: it would give him something to do with the old articles on modern writers, it would keep him working, perhaps there would be some money. It was very far from his mind that the book would serve to define its subject for decades to come, or that Auden and Cyril Connolly would regard him as the Paul of modernism. But Wilson had done furious detective work on *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses* and, like his research on the Dead Sea Scrolls much later, it paid off. *Axel's Castle* is dedicated to Christian Gauss, who taught Wilson European literature at Princeton, and whose view of literature as part of the history of ideas gave impetus to the earlier chapters of *To the Finland Station* as well. In the letters, he is addressed as "Mr. Gauss" well into Wilson's thirties. Then, as the essays on socialism start to appear, the balance of respect shifts a little, and Gauss is content to go to school with Wilson. The Marx who wanted us to hunt, fish, and even read is now much better known than the carbuncular churl who looked like Holmes's Moriarty, and since Wilson was the first teacher of Marx for so many of us, and played so large a role in humanizing the bogey of our childhood, we ought to take note of a single reservation that escaped him before he delivered his manuscript, in a letter to Max Eastman of February 1939:

> Did you ever notice it makes you sick to read Marx in too prolonged doses? It's the negative criticism and the rasping which never let up for a moment (and, in their correspondence and in his polemics, Engels tries to imitate him). I'm just recovering from a slight bilious attack brought on in this way.

To Malcolm Cowley, in the years 1937-41, and to John Dos Passos, throughout the '30s and again in the '60s, when the coiner of "all right we are two nations" was picked up by the *National Review*, Wilson wrote the only really political letters of this volume. His involvement in left politics turns out to have been less intense than we assumed. It began and ended in the '30s, and it was never passionate. While reporting on the Scottsboro trial, he tells more than one correspondent of his sympathy for the whites of that town, who are hugely outnumbered and naturally enough feel threatened. He is in fact more tired of the old system than eager for a new one: on his trip to Russia in 1935, he falls in love with Pushkin; but there is no specifically political interest in the trip, either before or after. He adopts a wait-and-see attitude toward the Moscow Trials; early in 1937, he drags himself out of his study of Marx for long enough to join the Trotsky Defense Committee; and from then on he gravitates toward the Beard-school isolationism that will serve him for the rest of his life. Still, the period yields some of Wilson's best negative correspondence—an occurrence as common with him as negative reviews—of which the finest are two letters fiercely remonstrating with Cowley for his fellow-traveling hackwork. In 1938, this cover note for an essay on Bakunin:

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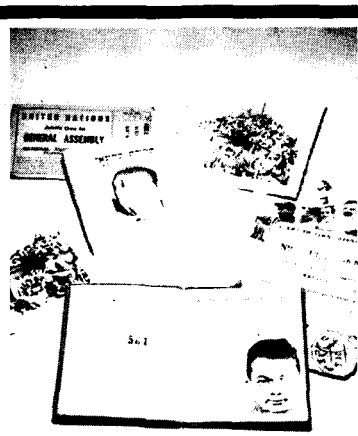

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What in God's name has happened to you? I was told some time ago that you were circulating a letter asking endorsements of the last batch of Moscow trials—though you had just published articles in which, so far as I could tell, you were trying to express a certain amount of skepticism. I don't suppose you're a member of the C.P.; and I can't imagine any other inducement short of bribery or blackmail—which sometimes appear in rather inobvious forms and to which I hope you haven't fallen a victim—to justify and imitate their practices at this time. You're a great guy to talk about the value of a non-partisan literary review after the way you've been plugging the damned old Stalinist line, which gets more and more cockeyed by the minute. . . .

In the summer of 1939 Cowley has still failed to mend his ways—now he is taking the Stalinist line against a Spanish revolutionary, José Robles—and early in 1940 Wilson catches up with him:

You seem to have given hostages to the Stalinists in some terrible incomprehensible way. Just at the time when it seems to me that the normal thing would be frankly to discard your illusions, you have been carrying on in a way that matches *The New Masses* at its worst. Last summer you were vilifying [José] Robles, about whom you obviously didn't know a thing except what the Stalinists had been pouring into your ear. I knew Robles, who spent a summer up here in Provincetown, and I can't imagine anybody less likely to have worked for the Fascists. . . . He had a brother fighting on the Fascist side, and he was one of the few Spaniards who knew Russian, so that he may have known too much. He was personally aristocratic and not at all the sort of person who would be likely to suppress his disapproval. What finished him was probably his enthusiasm for the social revolution, which the Russians were putting down. Now, what do you know about Robles?

OF WILSON'S CORRESPONDENTS, Zabel, Tate, Dos Passos, John Peale Bishop, and Louise Bogan were those who regularly got the best letters. For all of them he seems to have felt a special affection that strikingly bears out the psychological theory of transference: worried about intellectual hygiene in general, he became particularly attached to the steadiest and most promising objects of his labor, and began to think of their physical well-being too. By this curious method he formed a good many friendships that survived every nervous outburst and exasperation. When Allen Tate converts to Catholicism, however, there is much hilarity on Wilson's side, and, we may safely conjecture, an elegant but unposted challenge to duel on Tate's. Writing to a mutual friend, Wilson hopes that

conviction will soften Allen, who has lately been excessively venemous about his literary contemporaries. He never could forgive any kind of success: when *The Cocktail Party* was a box-office smash, he even threw over Eliot—so I suppose that after that there was nothing for it but Christ.

But irony is not Wilson's characteristic mode. These friendships deepened in proportion as they had the time to course within their banks. Other correspondents, who encountered Wilson when he was already a famous critic, found him as generous as ever but proud beyond the point of equality. Alfred Kazin has logged 20 years on the reviewing circuit before Wilson feels ready to tell him "You are able to express yourself much better."

Wilson's journals of the '20s were so empty, tiresome, and soul-sickening in their matter-of-fact rapport with decadence, that many of us secretly feared our estimate of him would have to be revised downward: all his vices were on display, wearing a sign that said—"And here you see the inner man." His letters therefore come as a relief as well as a delight. A lot of the nasty ones are still letters one would not have minded receiving, as Fitzgerald did not mind the searching review of his apprentice fiction. In 1951 Waldo Frank is sent a mostly appreciative note on his latest book, which contains a devastating attack on his style; he replies, not badly stung, and a warm exchange follows; at last Wilson says, "This correspondence is getting to be like those two Russians of divergent (not disparate or dissident) philosophical and political views who wrote each other long letters from opposite corners of a room in Moscow." And one imagines Wilson would have been happy to do just that. His downright insistence on the fact of himself and his independence is what engages us most, and makes him endearing. Rather oddly, Wilson is sometimes grouped with Lionel Trilling, as a literary critic who took a more than provincial interest in politics and culture; but he was without a trace of the "we"-complacency that became so fixed a part of Trilling's appeal; when he used the first-person plural, he only meant himself and the reader. He was an unrepentant "I." A sketch of him, along the lines of his early sketch of Boswell, would have to say: he was not only an intellectual but a Protestant intellectual in America, and this means that he was governed by two things—an uncompromising self-reliance, and a troubled democratic wish to find the same spirit alive in others. No one looking at Wilson's life can suppose that the wish was wholly fulfilled, or that he ever gave up on it. □

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LETTERS

Liberalism

Editors:

In the Summer 1978 issue Harry Boyte ("Beyond Liberalism: Toward a Living Democracy") wrote of the "antidemocratic assumptions" and "authoritarian traits" of liberalism.

Would he document those statements from the writings of authentic liberals like John Stuart Mill, Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, Morris R. Cohen, R. M. MacIver, and Isaiah Berlin? I did not find such traits or assumptions in his quotations from John Kenneth Galbraith, Gunnar Myrdal, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Adlai Stevenson.

Who or what is he talking about?

DAVID SPITZ

HARRY C. BOYTE Replies:

By the late '50s, democracy was a safely marginalized activity. Voting (for white America) had become a recognized ritual. If a citizen so desired he had the right to pass out a leaflet or attend a meeting; but it would be odd behavior of little consequence. Real decision-making was carried out by experts and administrators—a "fact" of politics celebrated by a variety of self-described progressives. "The apathetic segment of the population probably had helped hold the system together," remarked Bernard Berelson in his widely cited, seminal essay "Survival Through Apathy." Or as Robert Dahl, a most liberal and humane theorist of the welfare state, put it in his work *Hierarchy, Democracy and Bargaining in Politics and Economics,* "It is inaccurate to say that one of the necessary conditions for 'democracy' is extensive citizen participation."

Indeed, decades of welfare-state processes had robbed the American people of skills, folklore, and the confidence and knowledge necessary for effective collective decision-making. "The citizen became a client," as Barton Bledstein described it in his recent, excellent work, *The Culture of Professionalism,* "whose obligation was to trust the professional. Legitimate authority resided in special spaces, like the courtroom, the classroom, and the hospital, and it resided in special words shared only by experts." At the very moment of democracy's apparent trivialization, however, the civil-rights movement exploded across the political landscape, challenging conventional wisdom to its core. And through the '70s—as a kind of subterranean counterpart to the more visible right-wing corporate assault on reform—new democratic aspirations have spread among many millions of middle Americans uninvolved in any of the '60s protests. Indeed, a staple of the right's breathtakingly cynical rhetoric is the pledge to "return government to the people," reflected in Mobil Oil's call for "participatory government" and in Howard Jarvis's castigation of "government of the bureaucrats, by the bureaucrats, for the bureaucrats," alike. When progressives rediscover the radical democratic wellsprings of our heritage, we will be well positioned to once again take the initiative in American politics. But not, Mr. Spitz's incredulity not withstanding, until we comprehend the legacy that must now be overcome. □

"Beyond the Welfare State"

Editors:

Of the various contributions on "Beyond the Welfare State" in the Summer 1978 *Dissent,* I find myself in closest agreement with Henry Pachter who with proper caution connects his vision with existing social realities. My relatively minor reservations bear on two points, bureaucracy and efficiency. While I fully agree that the bureaucracy fulfills indispensable functions in political controls and social services of all kinds, and that its very "mulishness" can act as a healthy deterrent against political opportunists or authoritarian aspirants, I would worry more than Pachter seems to do about its propensity to stifle change, resist correction.

As to efficiency, Pachter seems to take its loss (through bureaucracy, through noneconomic concerns) somewhat too lightly. Certainly, efficiency should not be the sole determining factor in the production of goods and services. Yet it ought to be weighed carefully against other social considerations, with a trade-off often unavoidable. For its maintenance is indispensable to a continued high productivity without which there can be no improvement in living standards nor expansion of social services—under whatever social system. Indeed, the flexibility of modern developed capitalism in handling social change derives in large part from its constantly rising productivity, for a while accelerated, especially in agriculture, after World War II. I don't think this fact has received sufficient consideration among socialists whose periodic pessimistic predictions have regularly been confounded

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by subsequent developments. Thus, Western capitalism was able to expand social services, and is now busy developing environmental protection into a new growth industry.

Another basic requirement applying to any contemporary system of production and distribution is the need to set aside part of the social product for investment. Only static primitive societies could content themselves with the replacement of wornout tools—today's "socialist" societies, even in already developed economies, cannot escape the need for investments, although their nationalized enterprises often seem to have difficulties showing any surplus from which to cover them.

Modern capitalism, on the other hand, has been able to refine its methods for capital creation. Computerization made possible a reduction of inventories in relation to sales in industry as well as in trade; a highly developed credit apparatus permits increasingly the financing of current investment out of future revenues rather than out of past savings. (It also permits considerable waste and mis-investment.)

Finally, in the multinational corporation, based on the free flow of capital across national borders, modern capitalism has created an institution whose implications have not yet been fully explored and which, for the time being, eludes the control of national political entities and nationally organized unions. It remains to be seen whether capitalist flexibility can be maintained in the face of the most recent trends: the slowdown in productivity in line with the shift from goods toward services; the pressure on profits caused by the rise in fixed cost through the increased role of organization; the rise in energy costs; persistent inflation; limits in the expansion of the multinational corporations. Yet, I would caution against rushing into apocalyptic predictions.

For, along with these trends, there have been some major institutional changes. Among them, two are standing out. One is the institutionalization of investment capital through its increasing concentration in the hands of state-supervised financial institutions. To the banks, which since Nixon's Bank Holding Act of 1969 have expanded into a wide range of other financial operations, there now must be added insurance companies and nonprofit institutions, such as pension plans and other funds, colleges, union treasuries, etc., as additional major sources of investment funds. S. M. Miller has rightly stressed the significance of this shift in view of a future public investment policy directed toward socially desirable goals. Especially if one takes into account the rising amount of public subsidies of private investment, either direct, or indirect through the investment tax credit.

The other institutional change is the expansion of political controls of the economy in breadth (safety, minorities, consumer, environment) as well as in depth (financial operations, pension funds, etc.), with further regulation in sight (investment, energy, multinational corporations). Like earlier controls, these extensions were the result of *political* decisions, arrived at under social pressures of various kinds and forms, street riots included; even U.S. labor unions have for quite some time relied on political rather than economic pressure to pursue their aims.

These institutional changes should somewhat facilitate the next key tasks for social reform in the Western world in general and the U.S. in particular: direction of investment, containment of corporate power, distribution of wealth/income. In line with their social traditions, some countries have made first steps in these directions: France, with its tradition of state enterprise and technocracy, in investment planning and nationalization; Sweden in income redistribution. As to other fields, the U.S. with its populist tradition leads in financial supervision, environmental and consumer protection; England and West Germany in health services and co-determination; Sweden in humanizing the work process.

Altogether, these developments indicate that modern capitalism has both the ability and the willingness to bend to reforms and controls (or to turn them to its own advantage), while both technological and social changes have fundamentally altered the character of the "working class." In the absence of war (and war is hardly desirable even to the most ardent revolutionary), this means that any *radical* transformation of our society would have to be imposed from above in the Leninist or Maoist pattern, an alternative as unrealistic as it is unacceptable. Old shibboleths have lost much of their meaning. While capitalists have accepted more and more public restrictions on the exercise of private property rights in the means of production, the leading economist of the Italian CP has come out for partial denationalization, and East European Communist regimes are desperately trying to introduce market features into their economies without losing centralized control. In the West, neoconservatives talk of "incremental change," while radicals fall back on "structural transformation." But when and where "incremental change" becomes "structural transformation" is often a matter of semantics, temperament, or perspective.

GEORGE ECKSTEIN □

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Ulf Himmelstrand

Sweden: Paradise in Trouble

For over 40 years, ever since Marquis Childs wrote that best-selling book, Sweden has been known as the land of the Middle Way, which was slowly but consistently moving from a backward state toward its present position as the most developed of all welfare societies. Praised by progressive liberals, at least outside Sweden itself, its gradually achieved social reforms have been discussed contemptuously by dogmatic revolutionaries who profess to be true Marxists. However "pure" this Marxist criticism may be, armed as it is with the powerful if not flawless analytic tools of historical materialism, the "purer" fact remains that these critics simply bungle the whole story.

Even when critics have got the facts straight about this land of the Middle Way, their image of Sweden has been incomplete and superficial. In place of understanding, we have stale "profundities" about Sweden being a country that is stagnating morally and culturally—affluence corroded by boredom and drift, and by a loss of incentive for work and innovation—so "profound" that once again President Eisenhower's statistical nonsense about suicide is becoming fashionable. The conservative opposition, in the nature of things, always leveled these accusations. With the defeat of the Social Democratic Labor party in the Swedish general elections of 1976, they could not be so easily dismissed. The election results rocked progressive confidence that Sweden was on the right road to Utopia.

Marxists, whether supporters, critics, or merely observers, have been less concerned with moral and cultural decay and the loss of incentives than with the amazing stability of capitalism in a country that for more than 40 years was ruled by a mass labor party. In Sweden, to this day, 94 percent of the means of production in manufacturing are privately owned. Private gross investment (housing excluded) is 57 percent, and private investment in machinery 78 percent. Swedish exports, which constitute nearly a third of GNP and hence are a crucial factor in the welfare of the country, derive almost completely from private enterprise.

From what I hold to be a more genuine Marxist standpoint, it would seem possible, however, to argue that Swedish social democracy, by helping capitalism to develop and mature, in fact (if not in a conscious and deliberate manner) has brought Swedish society closer to a socialist transformation. Socialism is supposed to spring from the internal contradictions, problems, and crises generated within the capitalist order precisely where it is most highly developed. If Marx's prediction about the "bursting asunder" of capitalist social relations of production should be borne out in any highly industrialized nation, Sweden is a natural candidate. Admittedly, this "dialectical" interpretation is rather unusual among Marxists commenting on contemporary Sweden. Nevertheless, it deserves closer scrutiny. Even those who reject deterministic prognostications about the socialist transfor-

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mations of capitalist societies as propounded by orthodox Marxists might possibly find, in this interpretation of the socialist potential of late capitalism, a basis for a theoretically and empirically meaningful analysis of the Swedish situation.

I do not for a minute accept ideological propositions about the inevitability of socialism as a result of the mobilization of the working class in response to the decay of capitalism. But, after many years of research and political experience, I do believe that Sweden is far from being a stagnant society. It is indeed a country at a crossroad, with an enormous potential for qualitative and structural change, beyond the slowly incremental, and moving in the direction of socialist innovation within the framework of democracy.

Problems of Late Capitalism

PROBLEMS ABOUND in Sweden today, but they are the problems of late capitalism, not of democratic socialism. As seen from the "commanding heights" of a capitalist economic policy, several problems are obvious: the loss of incentive, if you wish, since the whole capitalist *cum* welfare system is approaching its limit of growth in consumer demand as well as in fiscal measures; the absence of innovative impulse and far-sighted investments, which lead to dwindling competitiveness and diminish the profitability of industrial production. Or as seen in the perspective of the man in the street: the acceleration of the work tempo; an improved but still quite inadequate work environment; poor job satisfaction with spillovers into impoverished and depersonalized use of leisure time; air, water, and traffic pollution; rapidly rising prices for food and services; threats of unemployment and the terror inspired in whole communities dominated by single, crisis-struck, dying industries.

Such lists of problems could be established for any advanced capitalist country. Sweden may exhibit some of them to a lesser extent than some other highly developed capitalist countries, but that is not crucial. The crucial fact is that Sweden, in spite of its extensive efforts to tackle most of these problems, is still unable to achieve real success in solving them—except, perhaps, in a few areas such as water pollution. It is the gap between aspiration and performance that generates a disappointment perhaps more intense in Sweden than in other societies even though the latter exhibit the same problems of late capitalism to an even greater extent.

Since Sweden is probably one of the most politicized countries in the world, these problems are the object of intense political debate. Comparative sociological surveys—most notably by the Finnish sociologist Erik Allardt and the British sociologist Richard Scase—support the conclusion that the Swedish citizenry, beneficiaries of a high level of social welfare, remain more aware than most others of the continuing problems of inequity, injustice, and class contradiction. It would therefore seem that the stage is now set for political action to solve these problems and so change society. But it is not that simple.

Problem-Solving in Business and Government

FOR SEVERAL DECADES, the Swedish business community collaborated reasonably well with the Social Democratic government. Until it lost power in the 1976 elections, that government was the driving force behind our ambitious but largely piecemeal social-welfare and monetary policies, while the basic problem-generating structures were left very much intact. This social policy imposed certain costs on private enterprise, but also earned it substantial benefits. During the long postwar period of economic growth, private enterprise could depend on a predictable labor market, favorable credit conditions, and on an expanding domestic market. The purchasing power of the public grew while inflation was contained at a reasonable rate. It was not, of course, a "free" ride for wealth. The business community demonstrated its perception of self-interest by supporting bourgeois political parties, which eventually

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displaced the Social Democratic government. Business reacted swiftly to the new political situation. In bargaining negotiations with the trade-union movement in the spring of 1977, the Swedish employers confederation (SAF) took a harsh and rigid stand, unprecedented since the late 1920s, not only with regard to wage demands but also on issues that had been legislated rather recently in parliament. Traditionally, these matters had been outside the accepted range of collective bargaining. Among other things, SAF demanded revisions in the legislated system of income benefits during illness, and of legislated provisions on working and vacation time.

The new government is not taxing the business community as severely as the Social Democratic government did. It is, in a general way, trying to improve the market situation for free enterprise and shows little taste for applying selective regulations on business. Yet, these new policies have done little to improve the business climate. In addition to the impact of the abnormally prolonged international recession, the domestic situation has deteriorated a great deal, particularly in respect to relations between labor and capital. Gloom and disenchantment were obvious at mid-term of the new government.

The solutions proposed by increasingly hawkish business leaders would ultimately dismantle some still significant welfare institutions. They would increase incentives for private capital accumulation and investment, allowing the market to operate with more complete freedom. Such a policy may indeed strengthen the position of capital. But the increasing strength that Swedish business may be gaining through further capital concentration, through the growing influence of investment companies and through investment abroad rather than in Sweden, may prove to be hollow. In its net effect, this strategy exposes the basically antisocial nature of capitalist relations of production, particularly at a time of prolonged recession when the most attractive asset of capitalism—its capacity for economic growth—is left in doubt.

Some less hawkish and more pragmatic business leaders may be aware of the hazards in allowing business criteria to show themselves in this naked and brutal manner. They may also anticipate the forceful reprisals to be expected from the powerful Swedish trade-union movement, and from the Social Democratic party if it is returned to governmental power in the 1979 general elections. But such pragmatism leads nowhere—except perhaps to a strategy of muddling through, which may work for a while in politics but will breed further stagnation in economic life.

When a crisis situation has deteriorated to a point where problems no longer are seen as exciting challenges but as a depressing tedium—as an occasion to find irrelevant scapegoats—then it is time to reconsider the very terms in which our problems have been perceived and defined. The pervasive chain of gloom and stagnation cannot be broken unless we discover that our problems no longer can be dealt with efficiently one by one, but only by tackling the social structures that have generated these problems in the first place, and that must be transformed in order to release new forces of social development. This may sound forbiddingly abstract or theoretical, but there is no way around it if we wish to escape what seem to be intractable difficulties and social boredom.

Structural Contradictions

LET US PAUSE here to restate some of the aspects of Marxist thought in terms that can readily be understood by nonbelievers. The Marxist perspective recognizes a basic contradiction in that the industrial forces of production become increasingly societal, while the decision-making machinery implied in capitalist relations of production virtually exclude consistent and effective considerations of the wide-ranging societal responsibilities of production.

What is implied by an expression such as "the increasingly societal character of productive forces"? Industry depends more and more on society and state for infrastructural, productive, regulative, and planning inputs.

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Yet it manages its own internal decisions in a manner primarily conditioned by the narrow and often short-term needs of single-firm profitability. Simultaneously, the growing transnational market of commodities and capital significantly reduces the ability of society and state to influence and control the effects of their intervention. As productive forces grow they become increasingly international in character. "Outcomes" of industry in activity such as variations in productivity, capital-intensity and related employment levels, and in the production of negative by-products (such as environmental effects) impose wide-ranging consequences on society as a whole.

The resource-accumulating, decision-making, and resource-allocating processes within capitalism—that is, the social relations of capitalist production—cannot match this increasingly societal and international character of the productive forces. Most of the piecemeal problems mentioned earlier derive from this basic problem of modern capitalism. They are generated by the structural contradictions of capitalism. But these contradictions of capitalism could be examined, not only with respect to the incompatibility of two overarching structures—the forces and social relations of production—but also in some other respects.

There are also more specific processes of internal and external contradiction unfolding as we take a closer look at concrete aspects of the modern capitalist economy: the competitive market, the interventionist state, and the incentive behavior of investors and labor.

A competitive market, in practice if not in the idealized models of neoclassical economic theory, operates in a self-destructive manner. The market is "self-contradictory" over time. The success that bred further success in what was originally a strictly competitive market succumbs, in time, to oligopolisitc or monopolistic structures. These, in turn, reduce or eliminate the very competition that is supposed to be the unique vehicle of optimal resource allocation in a free-enterprise economy.

This contradiction, coupled with recessions and crises, and the inability of capitalism to resolve them quickly, has promoted the demand for state interventions in all the advanced capitalist countries. Sweden was one of the first to introduce state intervention, first to fight the business cycles and, later, to mitigate market imperfections. It was the Social Democratic party that was responsible for these early attempts to improve the functioning of the capitalist order, and it did so with the support of such liberal politicians as the leader of the *Folkpartiet,* Bertil Ohlin.

But even when the capitalist order, intelligently controlled by the state, operates reasonably well both in terms of growth and of distribution, and by improving the standards of living for most of the population, as it did for many postwar decades in Sweden, new contradictions emerge. The growth of affluence hurts the very mainspring of the capitalist system: its reliance on monetary incentives and rewards.

Several studies have suggested that a majority of Swedish employees, including the lesser paid, just a few years ago were less interested in increasing their private consumption than in improving the quality of working life and safeguarding an environment threatened by industrial pollution. This new attitude found an expression in demands for monthly salaries instead of backbreaking piece rates, despite the fact that monthly salaries frequently meant less money in the pocket by the end of the month. Wildcat strikes, as well as regular union activities, have now brought about a shift from piece-rates to monthly salaries for large groups of Swedish workers.

Trade unions that have operated within the parameters of the capitalist order still demand higher wages, of course, since that is the job they have learned to do. But they have increasingly asked for other things as well: legislated authority to control health hazards at work, workers' codetermination, and worker-controlled capital funds that would give labor an increasing power over capital accumulation and investment. Monetary incentives are no longer seen as sufficient. No wonder that capitalist spokesmen complain

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about the loss of incentive to work. The only incentive they offer—monetary reward—no longer functions quite the way it did; and they are unwilling to offer the incentives of codetermination and power over capital now in demand.

As the unprecedented postwar years of economic growth and widespread affluence are grinding to a halt, other contradictions of the capitalist order emerge, especially as the puzzle of stagflation remains unsolved. Distrust in the system infects not only employees but also investors—see, for instance, an illuminating article by former President Ford's advisor Allan Greenspan in the *Economist* of August 6, 1977. Incentives for speculative and unproductive investments in art collections, diamonds, luxury houses, and idle land are often displacing productive investments in industry. This trend is as discernible in Sweden as elsewhere.

Liberal vs. Socialist Perceptions

LEADING LIBERAL ECONOMISTS in Sweden have arrived at ideas that roughly, but far from completely, correspond to Marx's concept of the contradiction between the forces and the relations of production under capitalism Progressive liberals are not unaware of what Marxists call the increasingly societal character of the productive forces, as contrasted with the narrow focus of business decisions.

Progressive liberal economists make an important distinction between the concept of business economics that emphasizes only private costs and benefits, and a broader concept of economics that embraces social or societal costs and benefits. These liberal economists are quite aware that there is no longer an "invisible hand" that will bring about an automatic harmony between private and social economic considerations. Though this perception may resemble Marxian theory, it differs significantly from a socialist conception based on a Marxist diagnosis of capitalism.

In Marxist terms, the structural contradiction of capitalism is not only a theoretical construct guiding the best informed decision-makers in government and private enterprise but also a reality that expresses itself in the exploitaion of those who have nothing to sell but their labor. Some Marxists realize that this exploitation no longer can be defined exclusively, or even predominantly, as an appropriation of surplus value; it is an exploitation that defines the quality of working life and also the quality of leisure since both have been shown to be closely correlated. Problems of family life and child-rearing, alienation of working-class youth in school, work, and leisure are all manifestations of exploitation in the contemporary capitalist order.

There is, to be sure, a precise class content in Marxist analysis that is absent in corresponding liberal notions. In effect, it points to a third actor on the stage beside the interventionist state and private enterprise—namely the *working class* as organized in trade unions and not only in political parties. The formation of social classes, which act out societal contradictions through measures of strike activity, political action, and so forth, is an element missing in the liberal understanding of the divergences between private and social economies. Of course, the existence of working-class organizations as *social facts* is obvious to everyone. What matters is that social-liberals cannot relate effectively to this "social fact," evidenced by the deteriorating relationship between labor and government in our present bourgeois regime. Nor do they seem particularly interested in theoretically considering the possibility of mobilizing this class under a liberal banner, since class action cannot be accommodated within the individualist framework of liberal theory.

The failure of Swedish social-liberal politicians to relate at all to organized labor (in contrast to the experience of the U.S.) has left them in a predicament where they have access only to one actor to tackle all the problems gnawing at capitalism, namely the interventionist state. This predicament is all the sharper because these Swedish social-liberals, during the long era of Social Democratic government, relentlessly at-

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tacked the role of the state and the actions of the central, governmental bureaucracies. Now that they are themselves in government, they cannot avoid using far-reaching state intervention, just as in other European states run by bourgeois governments. This is part of the internal inconsistency of bourgeois social-liberalism. Another inconsistency may be found in its refusal to make use of specific government interventions proposed by the Social Democratic opposition, limiting themselves, instead, to generalized measures supplemented by appeals to the "social responsibility" of private enterprise. But by definition, private enterprise cannot be socially responsible; in fact, it is not.

Though the policies of the Social Democrats in their 44 years of governmental power also were essentially social-liberal—i.e., the use of state intervention within the context of a so-called mixed economy—their "social-liberalism" could be pressed much more consistently and energetically than the bourgeois social-liberals would have dared undertake, given their ideological hang-ups regarding the role of the state.

Furthermore, the Social Democrats, because of their close collaboration with the trade unions, could involve more than the state in coming to grips with the problems of capitalism. The voice of organized labor was clearly heard in Social Democratic headquarters, and unions were usually willing to collaborate with the Social Democratic government. Now that this combination of capitalism, state interventions, and union collaboration seems to have reached its limits in negotiating the uphill stretch of economic policy, it is not too difficult for Social Democrats to change gears. The largely unused reservoirs of power, knowledge, and drive in the trade unions will be able to assert themselves in a new combination of labor and state collaboration once the Social Democrats recover their government posts.

But would not a political incorporation of the new issues of working-class power recently introduced by trade unions lead to more serious class confrontations, and thus threaten the creative national effort needed to get Sweden out of its present impasse? This has been suggested, for instance, by a leading management expert, Ulf af Trolle, who recently said: "We have created problems that cannot be solved in an atmosphere of confrontation." This statement is typically liberal in its idealistic belief that "confrontations" based on objective fact can be dissolved by wishes and good intentions. Policy formations based on mere good will are likely to intensify the contradictions they are meant to soften. There is no alternative to squarely facing the issues at stake, and allowing them to be articulated in political debate. We are now in the midst of such a debate in preparation for the next general elections in September 1979. Who will win that election, and those that follow, and on what platform? What is the likelihood of structural transformations in the relationships between capital and labor in the near future?

Who Is Losing Ground?

ON THE STAGE of social change, there are several other actors besides the political parties formulating state policy: the business community and the trade unions among them. I will limit myself here to the relative strength of the political parties and the prospects of a Social Democratic comeback.

Seasoned political commentators are already predicting a Social Democratic victory in our next elections, with another relatively long period of Social Democratic government. The three bourgeois parties now represented in the government have been unable to deliver on most of their campaign promises. Inflation 1977 was twice as high as before, taxes have not decreased except for certain higher income groups, private enterprise has not shown itself more capable of improving its performance, and the nuclear power program, which the Center party promised to abolish, is still being pursued, even if at a somewhat slower rate. Important and urgent decisions in this and other areas where the three parties in government could not agree have been postponed, and thus have given the Social Democratic opposition an

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opportunity to argue that our present government is incapable of ruling. In the one area where the present government admittedly is following the policies of the previous Social Democratic government—in fighting unemployment—they have been somewhat more successful. All in all, it is not surprising that public-opinion polls show a decline in support for the bourgeois parties.

However, all this could be a passing phenomenon. Viewed in a long-term perspective, it could be argued that a Social Democratic party deriving most of its support from the working class will inevitably lose ground, since the working class is diminishing in size. Certainly, the percentage of industrial workers is decreasing; today the proportion is only about a third of all those gainfully employed. But at the same time, lower white-collar strata are being "proletarianized," which may compensate for the decreasing proportion of industrial workers. Operating machinery as "unskilled" labor, and performing routine tasks without access to the privileged knowledge embodied in this technical machinery, has become increasingly common among so-called nonmanual white-collar workers. Furthermore, the position of white-collar employees is more vulnerable than it used to be; unemployment is as much a threat to them as to blue-collar workers. It seems necessary then to redefine the working class, as many have proposed in Europe and the U.S.A., to include clerical or service operations, which require no intellectual labor in the true sense. Under this definition, about three-quarters of all those gainfully employed in Sweden would be counted as part of the working class.

If the numerical strength of this working class were sufficient for constituting an electoral majority in behalf of a party prepared to initiate structural reforms leading to the abolition of the capitalist system, then Sweden would already have taken giant strides toward socialism, which it has not. The Swedish Social Democratic party in recent years has been receiving only between 43 and 52 percent of the electoral vote, and the small Communist party has obtained no more than about 4 to 5 percent. Not all members of the working class, as I have here defined it, vote labor. Factors beyond class position obviously affect the electoral vote. One such factor is the degree of unionization. Whereas more than 90 percent of all blue-collar workers in Sweden are organized in LO, the central federation of blue-collar unions, unionization, until recently, has been much lower among white-collar employees. The trend however, is clear: whereas only about 50 percent of white-collar employees were unionized in 1950, about 70 percent were unionized by 1975. Moreover, the collaboration between TCO, the federation of white-collar unions, and LO has become more and more intimate in recent years. Though TCO is careful to indicate that it is unattached to any political party, its stand on several crucial issues with regard to workers' codetermination, labor-controlled capital funds, etc., places it very close ideologically to the LO.

But Swedish labor is not only very highly organized and unified; it also has tended to become bureaucratized and centralized. The spread of wildcat strikes in the late 1960s and early '70s can be interpreted as directed against this "centralistic" trend in trade unions, and not only against management. The fact that quite a number of wildcat strikes have been fairly effective in attaining their ends plus the emergence of demands for a more responsive trade-union leadership has, in my judgment, and however paradoxically, increased the strength of organized labor. The same union leaders who officially condemn wildcat strikes have privately condoned them as significant reactions to underlying problems. They see in them, off the record to be sure, hopeful signs of worker mobilization and sources of strength, a collective resource to be tapped in future union work. The rise of a new generation of union leaders is significant in this respect.

To understand why the size of the working class and the strength of its organizations so far has not assured greater electoral support for a labor party committed to structural changes, we must take a closer look at the ideological components of class relations, and

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the subjective consciousness displayed by different strata within the working class.

I referred earlier to sociological studies by Allardt and Scase, which show that Swedes generally exhibit a stronger sense of conflict, inequity, and injustice than people in comparable countries—and this despite Sweden's superior welfare programs. The Swedish working class displays a higher level of such social consciousness than the population as a whole. According to these studies there is no evidence for an ideological "embourgeoisement" of the Swedish working class. Pursuing this theme Goran Ahrne and myself have carried out surveys probing the people's images of society, its threats and contradictions. We asked a series of questions regarding unemployment, inflation, nuclear power, and the like. These we called "piecemeal" threats. If respondents combine a perception of these threats with a perception of threats considered as systemic aspects of society—the influence of capitalism, the increasing mechanization of work, the growth of big business, etc.—we classify such respondents as exhibiting an awareness of the structural problems that go beyond piecemeal issues. We also asked questions about more "traditional" working-class identification.

We found that clerical workers with lower levels of skill, these new entrants into the extended working class, do not identify themselves as readily with the labor movement and the working class as will industrial workers. But they do exhibit an awareness of the structural threats of capitalism as frequently as industrial workers; their increasing degree of unionization would seem to promise a continued expansion of this ideological perception, since the awareness of structural defects is correlated with unionization. It is also interesting to note that this ideological awareness extends beyond the working class far into the upper middle strata, although it is not as frequently found there as in the working class itself. Consequently, the extended working class might be able to find a significant number of middle-class allies in support of structural reforms to reduce the flaws inherent in the capitalist order.

Finally, it is pertinent to emphasize that the emergence of this new type of structural social consciousness is not correlated with leisure-time consumption of mass-media and consumer commodities. Rather, it is linked to the objective nature of the work situation, as well as to the degree of unionization. Conjunctural swings in values related to leisure-time consumption are unlikely to affect this degree of social conciousness.

This social consciousness, however, merely sets the stage for the future. It implies no more than a certain definition of the problems of capitalism. The definition of a problem may be generally accepted long before adequate solutions come to be accepted by an electoral majority. But recently, the process of defining such problem solutions, and making them acceptable, has picked up speed in Sweden. The speed of this process depends not only on the objective conditions of work and unionization mentioned above, but also on the responsiveness of political leadership and the tempo of political decision-making. Our assessment of the political forces that push toward more socialist solutions will therefore be concluded with a few observations about the Social Democratic party.

Three Stages

LOOKING BACK at the performance of the Social Democratic government during the 1972-76 electoral period, when its position in parliament was rather weak, we find a quite remarkable list of legislative accomplishments on relations between labor and capital; for instance, acts on board representation for employees in joint stock companies, on management obligations to report on certain planning matters to trade unions, on greatly expanded powers for union-appointed safety stewards, on employment security, on the right of trade-union representatives to carry on union business at the workplace, and on the negotiability of most issues (which previously were the prerogative of management) within a scheme of workers' codetermination. The party was under heavy pressure

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from below, particularly from the trade unions, and it certainly proved itself responsive to these demands.

Sociologically speaking, the most important aspect of many of these new legal acts is that they were intended to counteract the centralism that has been so pervasive in Swedish society, without destroying the power of the national federation of trade unions, LO. Genuine, not fake, local controls are being placed in the hands of workers in local unions. One possible effect of these laws, apart from somewhat changing the power relationships between labor and capital, is to create a new social climate that will encourage new ways of thinking and acting about the relations of production.

Among proposals for new legislation, one in particular deserves attention, since it may bring about more profound changes in the relationship between capital and labor, at least if the Social Democratic party is returned to power in 1979. I am thinking here of the proposal for worker-controlled capital funds, originally initiated by the Federation of Metal Worker Unions. This proposal explores the possibilities of gradually transferring company profits to a capital fund controlled collectively by the trade unions. This would not only give trade unions a decisive proportion of the shares in these companies over a period of time but would imply a corresponding transfer of decision-making power from the traditional holders of capital to labor. The Social Democratic party was not prepared to make this an issue in the 1976 election campaign but is presently on the campaign trail to promote such a reform in the near future. The original proposal is now being revised to take into account the results of further studies and debates within the party and the trade-union movement.

The limited laws now in effect already reduce the decision-making power of capital within the existing order of private or company property. According to a voluntaristic interpretation of power, which assigns power to the majority will of decision-makers, the legislation already in force, if pursued further, could lead to a more complete economic democracy even if it did not change the basic features of the capitalist system.

Those who hold a structuralist interpretation of power may argue, however, that even if labor hypothetically achieves majority decision-making power, under capitalist relations of production, this could not significantly influence the movement of capital in the capital market. As long as there is a capital market, the movement of capital will be subject to market mechanisms and not to democratic decision-making. The capital market is a structural arrangement that, among other things, separates capital and labor into different spheres of operation. Since the movement of capital in the present economic crisis is often geared more to profitable speculation than to production and labor, the dynamic of the capital market leads to a worsening of the predicament of labor. On the other hand, the labor-controlled capital funds proposed by LO, TCO, and the Social Democratic party may significantly reduce the role of the capital market in capital accumulation and investment and may also help to reduce the contradiction of capital and labor. These funds will thus supplement the decision-making reforms provided in other laws at the point where these laws have shown their greatest weakness, and will make it possible to address more effectively the basic problems of capitalism.

Social Democratic historians now describe the development of the Swedish party in three periods. The first period was the struggle for universal suffrage and democracy undertaken together with liberal politicians some 70 years ago. In the second stage, the main issues were economic growth and social welfare redistribution. In the third phase, which has just barely begun, the main issue is economic democracy, which implies a step-by-step but still complete overhaul of power relationships between capital and labor. From the point of view of professional academic historians, as well as that of Communist writers to the left of Social Democracy, this sequence of periods may seem a bit too neat to be historically true. Whatever the case, my point is that this "periodization" of Social Democratic history

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is itself an indication of a changing ideological mood within the party.

But is the Social Democratic party likely to become strong enough in electoral support and parliamentary votes to implement a program of structural reforms? Space limitation precludes here a thorough discussion of why the party lost in 1976 beyond a few observations buttressed by recent public-opinion polls.

Several statistical analyses of the 1976 election establish beyond doubt that the outcome rested on a single issue—the question of nuclear power. One of the bourgeois parties, the Center party, promised to abolish nuclear power, and its leader even went as far as to promise that he would rather give up a ministerial post than compromise with his stand on this issue. There were, to be sure, other issues—a negative attitude to state bureaucracy and "socialism," for example—but these had arisen in earlier elections that were nevertheless won by the Social Democrats. Slightly more than half of the voters who shifted their allegiance from the Social Democratic party to the Center party seem to have based their switch on the nuclear-power issue. This same issue may appear again in the 1979 elections, though it is not likely to attain the same importance, for there is widespread disillusionment with the Center party as the largest party in the 1976 government coalition.

Where normally the parties that gained the most in an election for a while keep on gaining public support, this time the Social Democratic party has been growing remarkably after its defeat to a point where, since March 1977, public-opinion polls give it an absolute majority.

Whether or not predictions of a big Social Democratic victory in the 1979 elections prove to come true, it is clear that the Social Democratic party has not moved closer to the Center. The party leadership, as it enters its "third phase" of development, seems convinced that raising the issue of economic democracy, the real problem of Swedish society, corresponds with the mood of the electorate. The forces moving in a socialist direction are certainly more articulate and well organized than ever before, though perhaps more visible through the prism of sociological analysis than in explicit political pronouncements. But that is the Swedish way, low-keyed and reformist rather than expressive and rhetorical.

Forces opposing or trying to constrain structural changes in a socialist direction are certainly also considerable in Sweden, but they are less united. Most important, they lack a comprehensive and consistent diagnosis of the obvious weaknesses of the present system.

The outcome of a struggle between these opposing forces within the framework of a democratic policy is by no means certain. Some Marxist commentators have voiced apprehensions that the Swedish capitalist class may turn fascist. This seems far-fetched to me. There is no evidence to support such a prediction; it rests purely on deductions from a highly simplified theory of class struggle, and on analogies of countries very different from Sweden, such as Allende's Chile. I keep my fingers crossed; it could still turn out to be at least partially true.

However, my own analysis—tentative as it is and relying on "finger-tip" evidence—leads me to believe that Sweden, within a period of a decade beginning in 1979, will become the first country in the world to have taken decisive and virtually irreversible steps toward socialist relations of production in a democratic and reformist manner. I see the following scenario: The business community is torn between its dependence on an interventionist state and its internal needs to minimize private costs and maintain or increase its profitability. After further electoral defeats of the bourgeois political parties, they will pragmatically decide that "if you can't beat them, join them." Burnham-type managers, separated from the ownership of capital and primarily concerned with doing a good job, will become increasingly common in the business community and, to their surprise, will find it as stimulating to work for labor as for capital.

The greatest obstacle to taking these steps

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toward socialism will not be domestic. Our place in the international capitalist economy is not so easily resolved. Space prevents a full discussion of this point, but I would say it is very much a matter of timing and sequence. Certain changes, such as workers' control of capital accumulation and investment, can be realized while we still are part of this international capitalist order. Other, more far-reaching, socialist changes are virtually impossible without at least the initiation of change in this international economic order. Close collaboration with working-class organizations in other countries is therefore essential. The building of a full-fledged democratic socialist society is certainly not something to be accomplished within ten years.

Liberalism under Socialism

IF THE BOURGEOIS PARTIES stay in government long enough, contrary to my predictions, we can expect more consistency in private interests and the economic policy pursued by the government. The conflict between labor and capital, on the other hand, could become more intense. However strange this may seem, the basic contradictions of Swedish capitalism would be dealt with less effectively by a bourgeois than by a Social Democratic government.

This does not mean that victorious return of a Social Democratic government would not have its problems. One particularly interesting problem concerns the future role of trade unions in a system of production dominated by worker-controlled capital funds and company decision-making dominated by trade unions. Under present conditions, where the interests of labor and capital stand in clear opposition, the direction of trade-union policy is plainly on the side of labor. However, under conditions of worker-controlled "capital-fund socialism," the unions would have to operate on both levels—on the side of management and on the side of the workers. This double focus within the trade-union movement will require organizational innovations yet to be formulated in a way that will satisfy democratic criteria, articulate opposing interests, and still assure efficiency in production.

Should such a situation arise, part of the solution may rest with progressive liberalism. Unable today to place itself unambiguously on either the side of capital or labor, it might demonstrate a less ambiguous role under socialism, because it can then concentrate on its classical function as critic and as defender of individual human rights. We have to recognize here that problems of bureaucratic ossification and neglect for individual rights will exist in a democratic socialist society—just as they exist in our present type of capitalism. In a society that has arrived at a socialist order through democratic means and parliamentary legislation, the liberal posture could be maintained with more consistency and less ideological confusion. Once economic democracy based on workers' control and self-management has been made constitutional, these controversial issues, which now divide and confuse the social-liberals, will be removed from day-to-day political preoccupations, just as political democracy stopped being controversial in Sweden long ago. Social-liberals can then concentrate on a creative concern for individual rights and related issues.

Our Social Democratic leadership has repeatedly proclaimed that the Swedish style of socialism would not impose a one-party political system. In a future democratic socialist system adjusted to the specific historical requirements of Swedish society, with new and better relations of production having been legislated, opposing interests would still have to be represented by different political parties in parliament. Liberals may even find a role to play in trade-union elections where today they are seen as completely irrelevant. Paradoxical as it may sound, progressive liberalism would be more relevant in a system of democratic socialism than it seems to be in what we now call a liberal democracy.

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Postscript

November 1, 1978

This article was written in the spring of 1978. The economic picture has not changed dramatically since then, even though the economy has improved somewhat according to conventional economic aggregate indicators. These, however, do not adequately reflect the fact that the broad masses of employees have been paying heavily for the slight overall improvements.

The most dramatic change took place in October 1978. The three bourgeois parties in government then found it impossible to go on ruling together—mainly but not exclusively due to the nuclear-power issue. The Social Democratic party (which has continued to increase its electoral support according to the public-opinion polls) then suggested reelections but could not rally sufficient parliamentary support for this proposal. The Liberal party—the *Folkpartiet*—has been allowed to form a minority government that probably will rule the country until the next regular election in September 1979, by attracting whatever parliamentary votes can be obtained from the other two bourgeois parties—and occasionally from the Social Democrats. □

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A Public Service Message from the American Income Life Insurance Company of Waco, Texas—Bernard Rapoport, chairman of the board and chief executive officer.

High-Capital Requirements

By Bernard Rapoport

Notes for a talk given at the first annual Metroplex Entrepreneurship Seminar in Dallas, Dec. 2-3, 1977, sponsored by a group of businesses, financial institutions, universities, government agencies, and Metroplex area chambers of commerce.

We meet this day to discuss the concept of free enterprise. You have freely paid your money to find out how you can freely pursue a vocation that will result in your having rewards, material rewards that is, for being a small select group of Americans who forego security and accept risk for greater material rewards. Now we have established why you are here. What remains to be determined is whether the view you have of opportunity does in fact exist in our society.

We need to consider some negatives, and after doing so we must accentuate the positives. The most discouraging aspect of the former is that less than 100 years ago 80% of all Americans were self-employed, and today less than 8% are. The contributing factor in the limiting of entrepreneurial opportunity has been the technological growth that has occurred during these past 100 years.

Generally, technological growth results in far greater capital requirements and at the same time eliminates jobs. In other words, ours is a society which is increasingly capital intensive and less labor intensive. You might wonder why in the face of high unemployment we allow this trend to continue. I don't have the answer. I can only report what is transpiring at this time.

Having made this observation has led Mr. Heilbroner to conclude our capitalistic system will have only another 100 years.

He says, "Two reasons seem to me to define the life span of our present system, or of its politicized successor. The first of these is one to which we have now alluded many times—the fact that we are leaving a historic epoch in which the expansive drive of capitalism could be accommodated by an indefinitely rich and vast environment and entering an epoch in which that drive must be blunted and ultimately stopped by the progressively intractable obstacles of nature."

Let us reflect together about what Prof. Heilbroner is alluding to in more specific terms. When we thought of America as being a land with infinite resources, we gave little to conservation. We proceeded as if there was no tomorrow and exploited our resources without restraint. Now we know about limits.

We are aware but like to forget that a few countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Algeria can virtually bring this great nation of ours to a screeching halt. Things didn't have to turn out this way. We Americans have tremendous drive. We had it in such high gear that we forgot to install caution lights. We didn't think about tomorrow. Our technology in many ways got us to where we didn't want to be when we got there.

Obviously, if this trend continues, we will make a prophet out of Prof. Heilbroner and yes, Karl Marx too.

My purpose in wanting to talk with you is to prevent their forecasts from becoming true. The essential ingredient of entrepreneurship is willingness to take a risk. Too many of us in the business world today want to eliminate risk. This is why we have so many mergers, and amalgamations and holding companies. These organizations want more power, they want total domination; and if this process continues, there isn't going to be any place for those of us with entrepreneurial instincts. We will just end up with corporate socialism or corporate fascism, and you, my dear audience will have wasted your money attending an entrepreneurial session because there will be no entrepreneurial opportunities. . . .

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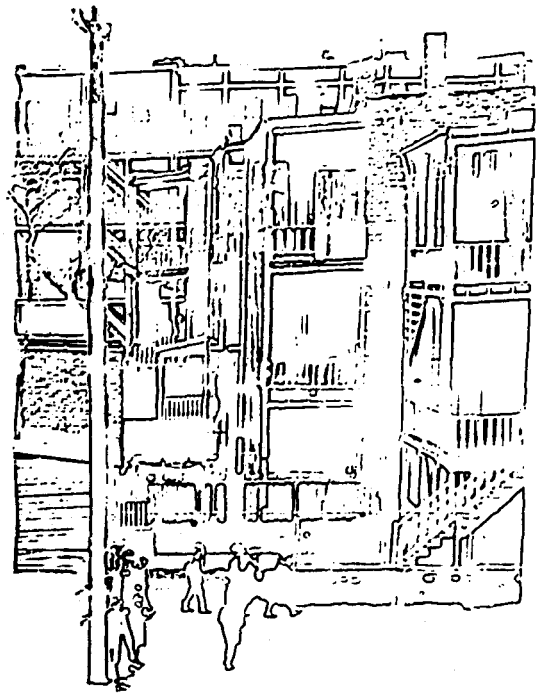

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